

ANNOUNCER: FUNDING FOR
"COUNTRY MUSIC" WAS PROVIDED

BY THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS

OF THE BETTER ANGELS SOCIETY:

THE BLAVATNIK FAMILY FOUNDATION,
THE SCHWARTZ/REISMAN FOUNDATION,
THE PFEIL FOUNDATION,

DIANE AND HAL BRIERLEY,
JOHN AND CATHERINE DEBS,

THE FULLERTON FAMILY
CHARITABLE FUND,

BY THE PERRY AND DONNA
GOLKIN FAMILY FOUNDATION,

JAY ALIX AND UNA JACKMAN,

MERCEDES T. BASS,

AND FRED AND DONNA SEIGEL

AND BY THESE ADDITIONAL MEMBERS.

[BOB WILLIS AND HIS TEXAS
PLAYBOYS' "NEW SAN ANTONIO
ROSE" PLAYING]

WILLIS:
OH, TEAR IT DOWN, MR. MAN.

TEAR IT DOWN NOW.

MAJOR FUNDING WAS PROVIDED
BY: THE ANNENBERG FOUNDATION;

BY THE ARTHUR VINING DAVIS
FOUNDATIONS,

DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING
AMERICA'S FUTURE

THROUGH EDUCATION;

BY BELMONT UNIVERSITY,
WHERE STUDENTS CAN STUDY

MUSIC AND MUSIC BUSINESS
IN THE HEART OF MUSIC CITY;

BY THE SOUNDTRACK OF AMERICA--
MADE IN TENNESSEE--

TRAVEL INFORMATION
AT TNVACATION.COM;

BY THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT
OF NASHVILLE

AND DAVIDSON COUNTY;

BY ROSALIND P. WALTER;

BY THE CORPORATION
FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING;

AND BY VIEWERS LIKE YOU.

THANK YOU.

âa HEADING DOWN SOUTH
TO THE LAND OF THE PINE âa

âa THUMBING MY WAY INTO
NORTH CAROLINE âa

âa STARING UP THE ROAD,
PRAY TO GOD I SEE HEADLIGHTS âa

âa SO, ROCK ME, MAMA,
LIKE A WAGON WHEEL âa

âa ROCK ME, MAMA,
ANY WAY YOU FEEL âa

âa HEY, MAMA, ROCK ME

[CHEERING AND APPLAUSE]

[BOBBY HORTON'S "WILL
THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN" PLAYING]

BILL ANDERSON: COUNTRY MUSIC
HAS ALWAYS BEEN A FAMILY.

âa

I THINK ONE OF THE THINGS
THAT DREW US TOGETHER

IN THE EARLY DAYS, WE WERE
NOT THE TOAST OF THE TOWN.

WE SOUGHT COMFORT
AND STRENGTH AND SOLACE

IN BEING CLOSE

WITH ONE ANOTHER.

IT WAS KIND OF AN "US AGAINST
THEM" MENTALITY, REALLY.

â

[TRAIN BELL RINGING]

NARRATOR: ON MAY 26, 1953,

THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE DEATH OF JIMMIE RODGERS,

MORE THAN 30,000 PEOPLE
FLOODED INTO HIS HOMETOWN

OF MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI,
TO CELEBRATE THE MAN

CONSIDERED BY MANY
AS THE FATHER OF COUNTRY MUSIC.

MAN: YOU'VE HEARD
THEIR RECORDS.

WE'LL ALL REMEMBER
THE ORIGINAL CARTER FAMILY.

LET'S BRING 'EM OUT--
THE ORIGINAL CARTER FAMILY.

NARRATOR: AN ARRAY
OF COUNTRY STARS TURNED OUT.

A.P., SARA, AND MAYBELLE CARTER
APPEARED TOGETHER

FOR THE FIRST TIME
IN 10 YEARS.

A.P. CARTER: I GUESS YOU PEOPLE
HAVE KINDLY FORGOTTEN

THE OLD CARTER FAMILY NAME.

YOU KNOW, A GOOD MANY
YEARS AGO, THE CARTER FAMILY

AND JIMMIE RODGERS WAS TWO
OF THE OLD FIRST ACTS

THAT STARTED IN BRISTOL.

NARRATOR: BLUEGRASS INNOVATOR
BILL MONROE

AND HIS BROTHER CHARLIE
PUT ASIDE

THEIR LONG-STANDING FEUD
FOR THE DAY.

RALPH PEER, WHO HAD DONE
MORE THAN ANYONE

TO RECORD BOTH HILLBILLY
AND SO-CALLED "RACE" MUSIC

IN ITS EARLY DAYS,
WAS THERE, AS WELL.

SINGING STAR HANK SNOW,
A RODGERS ACOLYTE,

UNVEILED A NEW MONUMENT
TO THE MAN MERIDIAN

HAD ONCE CONSIDERED
A WORTHLESS DRIFTER.

RODGERS "LED THE WAY FOR
ALL OF US," SNOW PROCLAIMED.

HE "HANDED IT OVER
TO HANK WILLIAMS,

WHO BRIDGED THE GAP BETWEEN
HILLBILLY AND POPULAR MUSIC."

ONLY 5 MONTHS EARLIER,
THE INDUSTRY HAD BEEN SHOCKED

BY THE PASSING
OF HANK WILLIAMS,

WHO, LIKE RODGERS,
HAD DIED YOUNG.

THE MEMORIAL FOR JIMMIE RODGERS
MAY HAVE BROUGHT THE FAMILY

OF COUNTRY MUSIC TOGETHER,
BUT IN 1953, A NEW GENERATION

OF AMERICANS WAS HUNGRY
FOR SOMETHING DIFFERENT.

â^a

[CHUCK BERRY'S "MAYBELLENE"
PLAYING]

BERRY: â^a MAYBELLENE,

WHY CAN'T YOU BE TRUE? âa

âa OH, MAYBELLENE

âa WHY CAN'T YOU BE TRUE?

âa YOU DONE STARTED DOING
THE THINGS YOU USED TO DO âa

âa AS I WAS MOTIVATIN'
OVER THE HILL âa

âa I SAW MAYBELLENE
IN A COUP DE VILLE... âa

NARRATOR: IN THE 1950s
AND EARLY 1960s,

RADIO WAS SEGREGATED, LIKE
THE REST OF AMERICAN SOCIETY.

RHYTHM AND BLUES
PLAYED ON STATIONS

PRESUMABLY
FOR BLACK AUDIENCES.

COUNTRY AND WESTERN
WAS HEARD ON STATIONS

PRESUMABLY LISTENED TO
BY WHITES,

BUT IN TRUTH, ON EACH SIDE
OF THE RACIAL DIVIDE,

YOUNG PEOPLE WERE
TUNING IN TO, AND BUYING, BOTH.

DARIUS RUCKER: AND A LOT
OF TIMES IN THIS COMMUNITY

OR THAT COMMUNITY, YOU'RE TOLD,
"YOU CAN LISTEN TO THIS.

"YOU CAN'T LISTEN TO THAT.

"YOU KNOW, WE DON'T
LISTEN TO THAT.

WE DON'T LISTEN TO THIS,"
BUT YOU KNOW WHAT?

PEOPLE THAT ARE BUYING MUSIC,
LISTENING TO MUSIC

ARE A LOT MORE OPEN

THAN YOU THINK THEY ARE.

BERRY: "OH, MAYBELLINE,
WHY CAN'T YOU BE TRUE?"

"YOU DONE STARTED BACK DOING
THE THINGS YOU USED TO DO"

NARRATOR: WITH ITS DIVERSE
AND TANGLED ROOTS,

FROM APPALACHIAN BALLADS
AND GOSPEL

TO COWBOY SONGS AND THE BLUES,

COUNTRY MUSIC HAD ALWAYS BEEN
A MIXTURE OF INFLUENCES.

NOW IT WOULD HAVE TO ADAPT
AGAIN.

TWO STRONG-WILLED WOMEN
WOULD COME TO NASHVILLE

AND BECOME FRIENDS ON
THEIR WAY TO BECOMING LEGENDS.

"I GO OUT WALKIN'...

NARRATOR: ONE WAS A BRASH
AND OUTSPOKEN VIRGINIAN

WHO WOULD SPECIALIZE
IN TENDER SONGS

OF ALMOST
EXCRUCIATING HEARTACHE.

THE OTHER WAS A COAL MINER'S
DAUGHTER FROM KENTUCKY

WHOSE MUSIC HAD
AN UNAPOLOGETIC TWANG.

"

TWO GIFTED SONGWRITERS WOULD
INSPIRE OTHERS TO JOIN THEM

AND HELP ESTABLISH NASHVILLE
AS A CAPITAL OF SONGWRITING,

WHILE TWO PRODUCERS WOULD TRY
TO SMOOTH OUT

THE MUSIC'S ROUGH EDGES,

CREATING A SOUND

THAT WOULD BE NAMED
FOR THE CITY ITSELF.

[ELVIS PRESLEY'S
"MYSTERY TRAIN" PLAYING]

BUT THE SONIC EXPLOSION
THAT WOULD BOTH SPRING

FROM COUNTRY MUSIC
AND ROCK IT TO ITS CORE

WOULD INCLUDE
A POOR BOY FROM MISSISSIPPI

AND A RESTLESS, DARK-EYED
YOUNG MAN FROM RURAL ARKANSAS

WITH AN UNMISTAKABLE
DEEP VOICE

AND A VORACIOUS PASSION FOR
EVERY TYPE OF AMERICAN MUSIC.

THEIR NEW SOUND WOULD ORIGINATE
NOT IN NASHVILLE,

BUT FARTHER WEST IN TENNESSEE
ALONG THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER

IN MEMPHIS, WHERE A PIONEER
RECORD PRODUCER BELIEVED THAT

THIS MUSIC COULD BE A WAY
TO BRING THE RACES TOGETHER.

MARTY STUART:
ONLY 240 MILES APART

BUT UNIVERSES APART
WHEN IT COMES TO MUSIC.

PRESLEY: "a TRAIN, TRAIN...

STUART: MEMPHIS HAS ALWAYS
HAD A LITTLE MORE SOUL,

MORE HORN-DRIVEN,
MORE BLUES-DRIVEN.

IT'S NOT A COUNTRY TOWN.
IT'S A RIVER TOWN.

PRESLEY: "a COMIN' ROUND,
ROUND THE BEND... a

THERE'S JUST A MAGIC
THAT COMES UP

FROM THE DELTA
AND THAT SURROUNDING COUNTRY.

IT'S IN THE GUMBO DOWN THERE.

PRESLEY:
"WELL, IT TOOK MY BABY

" BUT IT NEVER WILL AGAIN,
NEVER WILL AGAIN "

" OOH, OOH, WHOO!

"

[JACKIE BRENSTON & HIS DELTA
CATS' "ROCKET 88" PLAYING]

NARRATOR: IN 1954, A NEWLY WED
COUPLE ARRIVED IN MEMPHIS

TO BEGIN THEIR LIFE TOGETHER.

HE WAS FROM DYESS, ARKANSAS,

22 YEARS OLD, AND JUST OUT
OF THE U.S. AIR FORCE.

HIS YOUNG BRIDE
WAS FROM SAN ANTONIO.

JOHNNY CASH
HAD CHOSEN MEMPHIS

BECAUSE HIS OLDER BROTHER ROY
LIVED THERE,

WHERE HE HAD A JOB
AT A CAR DEALERSHIP.

ROSANNE CASH: ROY TOOK MY DAD
DOWN TO WHERE HE WORKED.

THERE WERE TWO MECHANICS
IN THE BAY--

MARSHALL GRANT
AND LUTHER PERKINS.

MARSHALL TOLD ME THAT
HE LOOKED UP FROM THE CAR

HE WAS WORKING ON AND HE SAW

MY DAD STANDING IN THE DOORWAY,

THIS KIND OF SKINNY,
BLACK-HAIRED,

RESTLESS YOUNG GUY,
AND MARSHALL SAID A CHILL

STARTED AT THE TOP OF HIS HEAD
AND WENT RIGHT DOWN HIS SPINE.

IT WAS LIKE HE KNEW--
HE KNEW SOMETHING--

AND DAD CAME OVER TO HIM
AND SAID,

"ROY SAYS YOU BOYS
PLAY A LITTLE GUITAR,"

AND MARSHALL SAID,
"VERY LITTLE," AND HE SAID,

"WELL, WE OUGHT TO GET TOGETHER
AND PLAY SOMETIME."

NARRATOR: BUT CASH'S FIRST
PRIORITY WAS FINDING A JOB,

AND HE SOON STARTED WORK
AS A DOOR-TO-DOOR SALESMAN

FOR THE HOME EQUIPMENT COMPANY.

ROSANNE CASH: HE WAS
THE SINGLE WORST

APPLIANCE SALESMAN
WHO EVER LIVED.

YOU KNOW, AT ONE POINT,
HE WENT UP TO A DOOR,

KNOCKED ON A DOOR,
AND THE HOUSEWIFE ANSWERED,

AND HE GOES, "YOU DON'T WANT
TO BUY ANYTHING, DO YOU?"

HA HA HA!

NARRATOR: ON HIS ROUNDS
ONE DAY, HE CAME ACROSS

AN ELDERLY BLACK MAN
PLAYING MUSIC

ON HIS FRONT PORCH
AND STOPPED TO LISTEN.

GUS CANNON: "A BEEN A POOR BOY
A LONG WAY FROM HOME... "

NARRATOR: GUS CANNON
HAD ONCE PLAYED

IN TRAVELING MEDICINE SHOWS
AND HAD BEEN LEADING A JUG BAND

ON MEMPHIS' BEALE STREET
WHEN RALPH PEER

HAD RECORDED HIM
BACK IN THE 1920s.

CASH STRUCK UP A FRIENDSHIP
AND SOMETIMES

BROUGHT ALONG HIS OWN GUITAR
TO PLAY WITH HIM.

ROSANNE CASH: PLAYING GUITAR
WITH GUS CANNON,

SLAVE SONGS AND BLUES
MEET THE DELTA, GOSPEL.

SOMEHOW APPALACHIA
GETS FILTERED IN THERE.

THAT'S IT.
THAT'S COUNTRY MUSIC.

CANNON: " SHE CRIED,
"THE BUCKET GOT... " "

NARRATOR: MUSIC HAD ALWAYS
PROVIDED BOTH SOLACE

AND AN ESCAPE
FROM THE HARSH REALITIES

OF LIFE FOR JOHNNY CASH.

"

HE WAS BORN IN 1932,

IN THE MIDST
OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION,

THE SON OF
AN ARKANSAS SHARECROPPER

TOO POOR TO PAY
THE STATE'S POLL TAX TO VOTE

AND A PIOUS MOTHER WHO
PLAYED PIANO 3 TIMES A WEEK

AT WORSHIP SERVICES
IN THE BAPTIST CHURCH.

HIS PARENTS SAID THAT THEY HAD
BEEN UNABLE TO AGREE ON A NAME

FOR THEIR THIRD SON, SO THEY
SETTLED ON THE INITIALS J.R.

IN 1935, THEY MOVED
FROM SOUTH CENTRAL ARKANSAS

TO THE DYESS COLONY,
A RESETTLEMENT COMMUNITY

CREATED BY PRESIDENT
FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT'S NEW DEAL.

IT OFFERED FAMILIES A FRESH
START BY PROVIDING HOMES,

20 ACRES OF LAND, AND SMALL
STIPENDS FOR FOOD AND CLOTHING,

ALL OF WHICH
THE COLONISTS REPAID

ONCE THEY HAD CLEARED THE TREES
FOR THEIR FIELDS

AND BEGAN RAISING CROPS.

YOUNG J.R. WAS PICKING COTTON
BY THE AGE OF 8.

ANNOUNCER: NOW HERE'S
THAT WELL-KNOWN

AND BETTER-LOVED FAMILY
OF RADIO THE CARTER FAMILY--

A.P., SARAH, MAYBELLE,
JEANETTE,

HELEN, JUNE, AND ANITA,

AND IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE
ON THE SUNNY SIDE.

NARRATOR: THEIR HOME
HAD NO ELECTRICITY,

AND THEIR ONLY LUXURY
WAS A BATTERY-POWERED RADIO.

THEIR LIVES WERE REALLY HARD,
AND THE RADIO

AT THE END OF A DAY,
EVEN THOUGH IT WAS LIMITED

BECAUSE THEY HAD TO SAVE
THE BATTERY,

THAT WAS THE LIGHT
IN HIS LIFE,

HEARING THE CARTER FAMILY
ON THE RADIO,

ALL OF THAT,
THE BLUES, AND GOSPEL.

CARTERS: "SOMEBODY'S BOY
IS WANDERING ALONE..."

ROSEANNE CASH: AS A CHILD,
MUSIC WAS SURVIVAL.

CARTERS: "AT THEIR OLD HOME
IS WAITING HIM THERE"

NARRATOR: J.R. HAD ALWAYS
LOOKED UP TO HIS BROTHER JACK,

WHO SAID HIS LIFE'S AMBITION
WAS TO BE A MINISTER,

BUT IN 1944, JACK WAS KILLED
WHEN HE WAS CUTTING FENCE POSTS

AND THE SAW BLADE
RIPPED INTO HIS STOMACH.

[BOBBY HORTON'S "POOR
WAYFARIN' STRANGER" PLAYING]

"I'M GOING TO THE LIGHT,"
HE TOLD THE FAMILY AS HE DIED.

"CAN YOU HEAR
THE ANGELS SINGING?"

LISTEN, MAMA.
CAN YOU HEAR THEM?"

ROSANNE CASH: THEY HAD TO WORK
THE COTTON FIELDS

THE DAY AFTER JACK'S FUNERAL.

SHE WOULD GO A LITTLE WAYS
AND THEN DROP TO HER KNEES

AND SAY, "I CAN'T GO ON"...

â

AND THEN THEY WOULD
SING A SPIRITUAL.

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NARRATOR: J.R.'s RELATIONSHIP
WITH HIS FATHER,

WHO COULD BE CRUEL AND DISTANT,
WAS ALREADY STRAINED.

NOW IT WORSENER.

ONCE, AFTER DRINKING HEAVILY,
RAY CASH TOLD HIS TEENAGED SON,

"TOO BAD IT WASN'T YOU
INSTEAD OF JACK."

J.R. RETREATED INTO BOOKS
ABOUT AMERICAN HISTORY

AND THE POEMS
OF EDGAR ALLEN POE,

WENT ON SOLITARY WALKS
AT NIGHT AND RETURNED FROM ONE

TO TELL HIS MOTHER
HE WOULD HONOR JACK'S MEMORY

BY BECOMING A GOSPEL SINGER.

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AFTER GRADUATING
FROM HIGH SCHOOL IN 1950,

CASH JOINED THE AIR FORCE
AND LISTED HIS NAME AS JOHN.

HE WAS STATIONED IN GERMANY,
WHERE HE MONITORED

THE HIGH-SPEED MORSE CODE
TRANSMISSION

OF SOVIET BOMBERS FOR 3 YEARS.

IN OFF HOURS, HE LEARNED TO
PLAY SOME BASIC GUITAR CHORDS,

FILLED SHEETS OF PAPER
WITH SONG LYRICS,

DREAMED OF STARTING
HIS OWN BAND,

AND WROTE DAILY LETTERS
TO VIVIAN LIBERTO,

A PRETTY AND PETITE
ITALIAN-AMERICAN GIRL

HE HAD MET DURING HIS TRAINING

AT AN AIR FORCE BASE
NEAR SAN ANTONIO.

â€

CASH RETURNED TO THE STATES
IN THE SUMMER OF 1954.

HE AND VIVIAN WERE MARRIED.

IT WAS THEN THEY DECIDED
TO MAKE THEIR MOVE TO MEMPHIS.

SOON, HE AND MARSHALL GRANT
AND LUTHER PERKINS

WERE GATHERING EACH NIGHT
AT GRANT'S HOME TO PLAY MUSIC--

SOME HANK WILLIAMS SONGS,
BUT MOSTLY GOSPEL--

WHILE THEIR WIVES PLAYED CARDS
IN THE KITCHEN.

THEIR SKILLS WERE LIMITED.

THE ONLY INSTRUMENT ANY OF THEM
PLAYED WAS THE GUITAR,

AND NO ONE WAS
PARTICULARLY GOOD AT IT...

RUFUS THOMAS:
â€ WELL, YOU AIN'T...

NARRATOR: BUT MEMPHIS IN 1954
WOULD PROVE

THE BEST POSSIBLE PLACE
AND THE BEST POSSIBLE TIME

FOR THEM TO GET GOOD AT IT.

THOMAS: "A BEEN SCRATCHIN'
AT MY DOOR... "

ROSANNE CASH: MEMPHIS IN THE
FIFTIES WAS JUST THIS HOT STEW.

ALL THE GUYS COMING UP
LISTENED TO WDIA,

AND B.B. KING
WAS A DISC JOCKEY,

AND THEY HEARD
THIS "RACE" MUSIC

AND WERE SO PROFOUNDLY
INFLUENCED BY IT

THAT YOU CAN SAY THAT
THAT STATION

AND THAT MUSIC CHANGED THE
COURSE OF MODERN COUNTRY MUSIC.

THOMAS: " YOU AIN'T NOTHIN'
BUT A BEAR CAT "

"A BEEN SCRATCHIN'
AT MY DOOR... "

BOBBY BRADDOCK:
THERE WAS A SAYING--

"THE BLUES HAD A BABY, AND
THEY CALLED IT ROCK AND ROLL,"

AND I ALWAYS SAID,
"YEAH, AND I THINK

THE DADDY WAS THE HILLBILLY,"
YOU KNOW.

PRESLEY: " WELL,
THAT'S ALL RIGHT, MAMA... "

NARRATOR: THE MOST POPULAR TUNE
ON MEMPHIS RADIO THAT SUMMER

WAS A SONG WRITTEN
BY ARTHUR "BIG BOY" CRUDUP,

A DELTA BLUES MUSICIAN WHOSE
ORIGINAL RELEASE HAD ENJOYED

ONLY LIMITED SUCCESS
ON RHYTHM AND BLUES STATIONS,

BUT THIS NEW VERSION
WAS SUNG BY A WHITE TEENAGER

WITH LONG SIDEBURNS,
SLICKED-BACK HAIR,

AND AN ALMOST ANGELIC
TENOR VOICE.

HIS NAME
WAS ELVIS ARON PRESLEY.

PRESLEY: "THAT'S ALL RIGHT
NOW, MAMA "

" ANY WAY YOU DO

NARRATOR: HE'D BEEN BORN
IN TUPELO, MISSISSIPPI,

AND, LIKE J.R. CASH,
GREW UP LISTENING

TO EVERY KIND OF MUSIC
ON THE RADIO,

FROM HILLBILLY TUNES AND GOSPEL
MUSIC HE LOVED AS A BOY

TO THE BLUES BY MUDDY WATERS.

IN 1954, PRESLEY WAS DRIVING
A TRUCK IN MEMPHIS

WHEN HE STOPPED
AT 706 UNION AVENUE,

THE HOME OF TINY SUN RECORDS.

ITS OWNER, SAM PHILLIPS,
HAD PREVIOUSLY RECORDED

RHYTHM AND BLUES ARTISTS, LIKE
B.B. KING AND HOWLIN' WOLF.

PHILLIPS HAD PAIRED ELVIS
WITH TWO MUSICIANS

FROM A HILLBILLY BAND
CALLED THE STARLITE WRANGLERS

BUT INITIALLY WAS UNIMPRESSED
WITH THE TUNES

THEY WERE PLAYING UNTIL
THEY STARTED FOOLING AROUND

WITH BIG BOY CRUDUP'S
"THAT'S ALL RIGHT, MAMA."

PRESLEY:
"I'M LEAVING TOWN, BABY

"I'M LEAVING TOWN FOR SURE

"WELL, THEN YOU WON'T
BE BOTHERED "

"WITH ME HANGIN'
ROUND YOUR DOOR "

"BUT THAT'S ALL RIGHT...

NARRATOR: "IT'S NOT BLACK.
IT'S NOT WHITE.

"IT'S NOT POP.
IT'S NOT COUNTRY,"

PHILLIPS SAID WHEN HE SHARED IT
WITH A LOCAL DEEJAY,

WHO PLAYED IT OVER AND OVER

AS CALLS FLOODED THE STATION
FOR MORE.

PHILLIPS QUICKLY SCHEDULED
ANOTHER SESSION.

ONCE AGAIN, PRESLEY STRUGGLED

TO COME UP WITH
SOMETHING DISTINCTIVE.

BILL MONROE:
"BLUE MOON OF KENTUCKY

"KEEP ON SHININ'

NARRATOR: THEY ALL KNEW
BILL MONROE'S LILTING WALTZ

"BLUE MOON OF KENTUCKY"

AND STARTED CLOWNING AROUND
WITH IT.

PRESLEY: "BLUE MOON,
BLUE MOON"

"BLUE MOON,
KEEP SHININ' BRIGHT"

"BLUE MOON, KEEP ON
SHININ' BRIGHT"

"YOU'RE GONNA BRING ME BACK
MY BABY TONIGHT"

"BLUE MOON,
KEEP SHININ' BRIGHT..."

NARRATOR: "HELL," PHILLIPS
SAID WHEN THEY FINISHED,

"THAT'S DIFFERENT."

PRESLEY: "SHINE ON THE ONE

"THAT'S GONE
AND LEFT ME BLUE..."

NARRATOR: THE SINGLE
THAT SUN RECORDS RUSHED OUT

BECAME A REGIONAL PHENOMENON.

RHYTHM AND BLUES STATIONS
PLAYED "THAT'S ALL RIGHT,"

WHILE COUNTRY STATIONS FOCUSED
ON "BLUE MOON OF KENTUCKY."

IT WAS ENOUGH TO EARN PRESLEY
AN INVITATION

TO PLAY AT THE GRAND OLE OPRY.

THE AUDIENCE RESPONDED
POLITELY AT BEST,

WHILE SOME OPRY REGULARS
GRUMBLED

THAT HE HAD DESECRATED
MONROE'S CLASSIC SONG.

CHARLIE DANIELS: THE FIRST TIME
I HEARD ELVIS PRESLEY,

I HATED HIM BECAUSE
I WAS INTO BLUEGRASS MUSIC,

AND I WAS BLUEGRASS

TO THE BONE BACK THEN,

AND HE SANG
"BLUE MOON OF KENTUCKY,"

ONE OF MY FAVORITE
BILL MONROE SONGS, AND...

â A-BUH BUH BUH BUH...

I THOUGHT, "WHAT'S HE DOING
TO MY SONG?" YOU KNOW?

PRESLEY:
â STARS SHININ' BRIGHT

â WHISPERED ON HIGH

â LOVE SAID GOOD-BYE

â BLUE MOON OF KENTUCKY,
KEEP ON SHININ'... â

STUART: MONROE DIDN'T LIKE IT
MUCH WHEN HE FIRST HEARD IT.

HE THOUGHT THEY WERE NOT
DOING THE RIGHT THING

BY WAY OF HIS MUSIC UNTIL
THE FIRST ROYALTY CHECK CAME--

HA!--AND THEN, I BELIEVE,
MONROE'S TUNE WENT TO,

"I TOLD HIM, "IF THERE'S
ANYTHING IN THIS WORLD

I COULD DO TO HELP YOU OUT,
YOU JUST LET ME KNOW."

HA HA HA!

PRESLEY: â I'VE BEEN
TRAVELING OVER MILES â

â EVEN THROUGH
THE VALLEYS, TOO... â

NARRATOR: PRESLEY AND HIS MUSIC
SEEMED TOO RADICAL

FOR THE OPRY,
AND THEY DID NOT ASK HIM BACK.

PRESLEY: â BABY, TRYIN'
TO GET TO YOU â

NARRATOR: PHILLIPS THEN
SENT HIM TO SHREVEPORT

AND THE "LOUISIANA HAYRIDE,"
WHICH HAD PROVIDED

HANK WILLIAMS A PLATFORM
WHEN NO ONE ELSE WOULD.

THE "HAYRIDE'S" AUDIENCE
LOVED HIM

AND CALLED HIM
THE HILLBILLY CAT.

PRESLEY: "THAT YOU
REALLY LOVE ME TRUE"

"LORD ABOVE ME
KNOWS I LOVE YOU"

"IT WAS HE
WHO BROUGHT ME THROUGH..."

NARRATOR: A NEWSPAPER
MARVELED AT WHAT IT CALLED

"A WHITE MAN'S VOICE
SINGING NEGRO RHYTHMS."

BACK IN MEMPHIS, SAM PHILLIPS
PUT IT ANOTHER WAY.

"I WENT OUT," HE SAID,

"AND KNOCKED THE ...
OUT OF THE COLOR LINE."

"

IN LATE 1954, PHILLIPS ARRIVED
AT WORK TO FIND JOHNNY CASH

SITTING IN THE DOORWAY
ASKING FOR AN AUDITION.

RALPH EMERY: THERE WAS
SOMETHING IN HIS VOICE,

AND I GUESS SAM HEARD IT.

HE THOUGHT MAYBE HE COULD MAKE
LIGHTNING STRIKE TWICE.

JOHN WANTED TO BE A GOSPEL
SINGER, AND SAM DIDN'T--

HE SAID, "I CAN'T SELL
GOSPEL RECORDS.

WRITE SOMETHING THAT'S
NOT GOSPEL, AND I'LL CUT IT."

NARRATOR: CASH PUT A SIMPLE
MELODY TO A POEM HE HAD WRITTEN

ABOUT COMING HOME ON THE TRAIN,
"HEY PORTER,"

AND BEGAN PRACTICING

WITH LUTHER PERKINS
ON A BORROWED ELECTRIC GUITAR

AND MARSHALL GRANT,
WHO WAS LEARNING TO PLAY BASS.

"THERE'S SOMETHING SQUIRRELY
ABOUT YOU GUYS," PHILLIPS SAID

WHEN HE HEARD
THEIR STRIPPED-DOWN STYLE,

BUT HE ADMITTED,
"IT'S DIFFERENT."

JOHNNY CASH: "HEY, PORTER,
HEY, PORTER"

"WHAT TIME DID YOU SAY?

"HOW MUCH LONGER WILL IT BE

"TILL I CAN SEE
THE LIGHT OF DAY?"

"WHEN WE HIT DIXIE,
WILL YOU TELL THAT ENGINEER"

"TO RING HIS BELL

"AND ASK EVERYBODY
THAT AIN'T ASLEEP"

"TO STAND RIGHT UP AND YELL?

THEY CALLED THEMSELVES

JOHNNY CASH
AND THE TENNESSEE TWO.

JOHNNY CASH: HELLO, FOLKS.

THIS IS JOHNNY CASH,
AND I'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE YOU

TO THE OTHER TWO BOYS HERE.

THIS IS LUTHER PERKINS
OVER HERE

HITTING ALL THOSE HARD NOTES
ON THAT GUITAR--

[GUITAR PLAYS]

OH, GO, LUTHER--

AND MARSHALL GRANT
HITTING THE LOW NOTES

ON THIS BASS FIDDLE OVER HERE.

â€”a GONNA HAVE TO STRAIN MY EYES,
BUT ASK THAT ENGINEER... â€”a

ELVIS COSTELLO:
HIS VOICE IS SINGULAR.

TENNESSEE TWO,
THAT'S LIKE A PUNK BAND,

YOU KNOW, IF YOU THINK
ABOUT IT.

IT'S LIKE, IT'S SO--

IT'S JUST, LIKE, YOU KNOW,
THE BASS IS SO PERCUSSIVE

AND LUTHER PERKINS JUST
PLAYING, LIKE, THE 4 NOTES

THAT SEEM TO, YOU KNOW--

HE SEEMED TO ONLY KNOW 4 NOTES.

I LITERALLY THINK THEY SOUND
LIKE PUNK ROCK RECORDS.

I MEAN THAT
AS THE HIGHEST COMPLIMENT.

I MEAN, THEY'RE JUST SO VIVID.

JOHNNY CASH: â€”a HEY, PORTER,
HEY, PORTER â€”a

â€”a PLEASE OPEN UP THE DOOR...

NARRATOR: FOR A WHILE,
JOHNNY CASH

AND HIS FELLOW SUN RECORDS
ARTIST ELVIS PRESLEY

WERE SENT OUT ON TOURS
TOGETHER,

MOSTLY IN THE SOUTH
AND SOUTHWEST,

OPENING FOR
BETTER-KNOWN COUNTRY STARS.

[HANK SNOW'S
"AMONG MY SOUVENIRS" PLAYING]

BILL C. MALONE:
IN 1955, I WAS A STUDENT

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS.

I WENT DOWN TO THE OLD COLISEUM
TO SEE HANK SNOW,

WHO WAS MY FAVORITE
AT THE TIME,

AND HANK HAD TO CUT
HIS PROGRAM SHORT

IN ORDER TO LET ELVIS
HAVE A SECOND SHOW.

PRESLEY:
"WELL, I HEARD THE NEWS

"THERE'S GOOD ROCKIN'
TONIGHT"

"WELL, I HEARD THE NEWS...

MALONE: AS I WATCHED ELVIS,
I THOUGHT--

WELL, I THOUGHT I SAW
THE BEGINNING

OF THE END OF THE MUSIC
I LOVED.

PRESLEY: "LET'S ROCK,
ROCK, ROCK"

"WELL, LET'S ROCK, ROCK,
ROCK, ROCK"

â WE'RE GONNA ROCK
ALL OUR BLUES AWAY â

NARRATOR: OUT ON THE ROAD,
JOHNNY CASH

AND PRESLEY BECAME FRIENDS.

ELVIS CALLED CASH "OLD MAN"
BECAUSE CASH WAS 3 YEARS OLDER.

CASH CALLED PRESLEY
"THE SHAKY KID"

AND SOMETIMES
IMPERSONATED HIM ON STAGE.

â WELL, IT'S DOWN
AT THE END OF LONELY STREET â

â AT HEARTBREAK HOTEL

â I FEEL SO...

[GIRLS SCREAM]

â YOU'LL BE SO LONELY

â YOU'LL BE
SO LONELY â

â YOU COULD DIE

NARRATOR: THE TERM USED
TO DESCRIBE THE MUSIC

THAT HAD BEEN BORN AT
SUN RECORDS WAS "ROCKABILLY,"

AND IT WAS BEGINNING
TO CATCH ON.

JOHNNY CASH: â EVERYBODY KNOWS
WHERE YOU GO â

â WHEN THE SUN GOES DOWN

â I THINK YOU ONLY LIVE
TO SEE THE LIGHTS OF TOWN â

â I WASTED MY TIME
WHEN I WOULD TRY, TRY, TRY â

â 'CAUSE WHEN THE LIGHTS
HAVE LOST THEIR GLOW â

â YOU'LL CRY, CRY, CRY

NARRATOR: FRESH OUT OF
HIGH SCHOOL IN OKLAHOMA CITY,

WANDA JACKSON HAD
STARTED OUT SINGING

COUNTRY BALLADS
AND COWBOY SONGS.

JACKSON: Y'ALL LIKE LOVE SONGS?
DO YOU? GOOD. I LIKE THOSE.

THIS ONE REALLY TELLS
A BEAUTIFUL STORY

IF YOU CAN PAY REAL CLOSE
ATTENTION TO THE WORDS,

AND IF YOU LIKE LOVE SONGS,
WELL, WE THINK THIS IS ONE

OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL LOVE
SONGS THAT'S EVER BEEN WRITTEN,

AND WE'D LIKE TO DO IT
ESPECIALLY FOR ALL OF Y'ALL.

GOES LIKE THIS.

NARRATOR: WANDA JACKSON
WOULD COME TO BE CALLED

THE QUEEN OF ROCKABILLY.

DO THAT AGAIN. THAT'S PRETTY.

[PLAYS E MAJOR CHORD]

â WELL, A HARD-HEADED WOMAN,
A SOFT-HEARTED MAN â

â BEEN THE CAUSE OF TROUBLE
EVER SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN â

â AND I SAID, OH, YEAH,
EVER SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN â

WHOO! YEAH!

â WELL, A HARD-HEADED WOMAN IS
A THORN IN THE SIDE OF A MAN â

â WELL, ADAM SAID TO EVE...

NARRATOR: ROCKABILLY

STARTED TURNING UP EVERYWHERE.

ROY ORBISON CAME FROM
THE OIL FIELDS OF WINK, TEXAS.

JERRY LEE LEWIS WAS
A FLAMBOYANT PIANO PLAYER

FROM FERRIDAY, LOUISIANA.

BUDDY HOLLY
WAS FROM LUBBOCK, TEXAS.

HAROLD LLOYD JENKINS
TURNED DOWN A CONTRACT

TO PLAY MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

AND BEGAN TOURING
AS CONWAY TWITTY.

“ AND A HARD-HEADED WOMAN IS
A THORN IN THE SIDE OF A MAN ”

”

“ WELL, IT'S ONE FOR THE MONEY,
TWO FOR THE SHOW ”

“ 3 TO GET READY,
NOW GO, CAT, GO ”

“ BUT DON'T YOU STEP
ON MY BLUE SUEDE SHOES... ”

NARRATOR: CARL PERKINS
WAS FROM WEST TENNESSEE.

HE BECAME A CLOSE FRIEND
OF JOHNNY CASH

AFTER BOTH MEN DISCOVERED
THEY HAD SCARS

ON THEIR FINGERS
FROM PICKING COTTON.

CASH TOLD HIM A STORY
ABOUT A MAN HE HAD MET

IN THE AIR FORCE WHO PRIDED
HIMSELF ON HIS SPIFFY CLOTHES

AND ALWAYS SAID, "DON'T STEP ON
MY BLUE SUEDE SHOES."

PERKINS TURNED THAT INTO

HIS FIRST BIG ROCKABILLY HIT.

ELVIS WOULD MAKE IT
EVEN BIGGER.

PRESLEY: "WELL,
IT'S ONE FOR THE MONEY "

" TWO FOR THE SHOW

" 3 TO GET READY,
NOW GO, CAT, GO "

" BUT DON'T YOU STEP
ON MY BLUE SUEDE SHOES "

" WELL, YOU CAN DO ANYTHING

" BUT STAY OFF
MY BLUE SUEDE SHOES "

I THINK PEOPLE
IN THE BEGINNING

DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO
WITH HIM.

DO YOU PLAY HIM COUNTRY?
DO YOU PLAY HIM POP?

HE WAS DOING BILL MONROE'S
BLUEGRASS SONG,

AND THEN "THAT'S ALRIGHT MAMA"
WAS A RHYTHM AND BLUES PIECE,

AND THEN BY THE TIME
HE GOT DOWN TO "DON'T BE CRUEL,"

HE WAS GONE.

PRESLEY: " LAY OFF
MY BLUE SUEDE SHOES "

NARRATOR: MEANWHILE,
JOHNNY CASH STAYED PUT.

HE WAS DOING WELL ENOUGH TO BUY
A HOUSE IN NORTHEAST MEMPHIS

FOR HIS GROWING FAMILY.

VIVIAN HAD GIVEN BIRTH TO TWO
DAUGHTERS--ROSANNE AND KATHY.

THE "LOUISIANA HAYRIDE"
HAD MADE HIM A REGULAR,

AND MARSHALL GRANT
AND LUTHER PERKINS

QUIT THEIR JOBS
AS AUTO MECHANICS.

IN JULY OF 1956, HE MADE
HIS FIRST GUEST APPEARANCE

AT THE GRAND OLE OPRY,
WHERE SOMEONE BACKSTAGE

TOLD A REPORTER,
"HE'LL BE BETTER THAN ELVIS

"BECAUSE JOHNNY'S
A TRUE COUNTRY SINGER

AND PRESLEY ISN'T
AND NEVER HAS BEEN."

A NEW SINGLE OF CASH'S
HAD JUST BECOME

HIS FIRST NUMBER-ONE
COUNTRY HIT.

IT WAS FOR VIVIAN,
WHO HAD BECOME WORRIED

THAT ON HIS TOURS,
HE WOULD SUCCUMB TO ONE

OF THE WELL-KNOWN TEMPTATIONS
OF THE ROAD.

TALKING ABOUT VIVIAN'S CONCERNS
WITH CARL PERKINS,

CASH HAD SAID THAT AS A MARRIED
MAN, "I WALK THE LINE."

PERKINS REPLIED,
"THAT'S YOUR TITLE."

JOHNNY CASH: â I KEEP A CLOSE
WATCH ON THIS HEART OF MINE â

â I KEEP MY EYES WIDE OPEN
ALL THE TIME â

â I KEEP THE ENDS OUT
FOR THE TIE THAT BINDS â

â BECAUSE YOU'RE MINE,
I WALK THE LINE â

â MM...

â AS SURE AS NIGHT IS DARK
AND DAY IS LIGHT â

â I KEEP YOU ON MY MIND
BOTH DAY AND NIGHT... â

ROSANNE CASH: THE SONG
CAME FROM MY MOTHER'S FEAR,

"YOU KNOW, YOU'RE
GOING OUT ON THE ROAD,

AND THESE GIRLS
ARE COMING UP TO YOU,"

AND HE WROTE
"I WALK THE LINE."

"I'M GOING TO STAY
TRUE TO YOU."

OF COURSE, THAT WASN'T TRUE.

JOHNNY CASH:
â I KEEP A CLOSE WATCH

â ON THIS HEART OF MINE...

NARRATOR: BACKSTAGE AT THE OPRY
AFTER SINGING

"I WALK THE LINE,"
CASH MET FOR THE FIRST TIME

SOMEONE WHOSE VOICE
HE HAD ONCE HEARD

ON HIS FAMILY'S RADIO
BACK IN DYESS, ARKANSAS.

IT WAS JUNE CARTER.

â

BRENDA LEE:
IT'S ALL INTERTWINED.

COUNTRY MUSIC, FOLK MUSIC,
BLUES MUSIC, ROCK MUSIC,

YOU NAME IT, THEY'RE ALL
KIND OF POETRY-DRIVEN,

AND I THINK

IT'S ALL INTERTWINED.

SMALL PACKAGES
IN SHOW BUSINESS,

MISS BRENDA LEE TO SING
HER NEW RECORD "DYNAMITE."

HEY!

CHORUS: ♪ OOH LA OOH LA
OOH LA OOH LA, DYNAMITE ♪

♪ YOU'RE DYNAMITE

♪ OOH LA OOH LA
OOH LA OOH LA, DYNAMITE ♪

♪ YOU'RE DYNAMITE

♪ DYNAMITE!

♪ HEY, BABY, WHEN YOU KISS,
IT'S DYNAMITE ♪

♪ HEY, BABY WHEN
YOU HUG AND HOLD ME TIGHT ♪

♪ I JUST EXPLODE
LIKE DYNAMITE ♪

THEY CATEGORIZED ME
AS ROCKABILLY.

WELL, I DIDN'T KNOW
IT WAS ROCKABILLY.

I'M JUST SINGING SONGS
THAT WERE GIVEN ME,

SINGING THEM LIKE I SANG,
AND THEN ALL OF A SUDDEN,

I WAS ROCK,

AND THEN ALL OF A SUDDEN,
I WAS POP.

THEN ALL OF A SUDDEN,
I BECAME COUNTRY.

♪ JUST KNOCKS ME OUT
LIKE DYNAMITE ♪

WHEN A SINGER IS ABSOLUTELY
PASSIONATE ABOUT WHAT THEY DO,

I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD
PIGEONHOLE THEM

BECAUSE IF YOU ASK US ARTISTS,

WHEN IT'S ALL SAID AND DONE,
IT'S MUSIC.

THAT'S ALL IT IS.

â LET'S MAKE HISTORY TONIGHT

â THE POWER OF ONE HOUR'S
LOVE DELIGHT â

â JUST KNOCKS ME OUT
LIKE DYNAMITE â

â BECAUSE YOU'RE DYNAMITE

[APPLAUSE]

NARRATOR: BUT AS ROCK AND ROLL
TOOK OVER THE AIRWAVES

AND DOMINATED RECORD SALES
IN THE MID 1950s,

THE POSTWAR BOOM
IN COUNTRY MUSIC

SEEMED TO GO BUST
ALMOST OVERNIGHT.

THE NUMBER OF STATIONS
DEVOTED TO COUNTRY

SHRANK FROM 600 TO ABOUT 85.

COUNTRY MUSIC
JUST DIED ON THE VINE.

YOU COULD DIAL YOUR RADIO
BACK AND FORTH ALL THE TIME.

YOU COULDN'T FIND
A COUNTRY SONG.

THE GENERAL CENSUS
IN THE COUNTRY

AND COUNTRY-AND-WESTERN
COMMUNITY ABOUT ROCK AND ROLL

WAS, "MAYBE IT'LL GO AWAY.

IF WE JUST HANG IN THERE

LONG ENOUGH, IT'LL GO AWAY."

NARRATOR: ON SOME NIGHTS,
THE "GRAND OLE OPRY"

ON NASHVILLE'S WSM, WHICH HAD
GIVEN ELVIS THE COLD SHOULDER,

FOUND ITSELF PLAYING IN
A HALF-EMPTY RYMAN AUDITORIUM.

EDDIE STUBBS: THE FIDDLE
IN COUNTRY MUSIC

WAS LARGELY ON LIFE SUPPORT.

IF IT HADN'T OF BEEN
FOR RAY PRICE, THE FIDDLE

MAY HAVE GONE AWAY COMPLETELY
IN COUNTRY MUSIC.

NARRATOR: RAY PRICE WAS
AN OLD FRIEND OF HANK WILLIAMS.

HIS RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS
IN COUNTRY MUSIC

WAS TO DOUBLE DOWN, IGNORING
ROCK AND ROLL COMPLETELY

AND STICKING CLOSER
TO HIS COUNTRY ROOTS.

PEOPLE CALLED IT
THE TEXAS SHUFFLE.

â THIS AIN'T NO CRAZY DREAM,
I KNOW THAT IT'S REAL â

â YOU'RE SOMEONE ELSE'S
LOVE NOW â

â YOU'RE NOT MINE

SOMEBODY ASKED OLD RAY
ONE TIME, SAID,

"RAY, CAN YOU DEFINE
A SHUFFLE?"

HE SAID, "YES."

HE SAID, "IT'S A BEAT THAT
MAKES A SLOW SONG FEEL FAST."

â AND THAT'S WHY I'M LONELY

ALL THE TIME

NARRATOR: SOME COUNTRY ARTISTS,
DESPERATE TO APPEAR RELEVANT

AND SELL RECORDS, TRIED TO GO
IN A DIFFERENT DIRECTION,

TOWARD POPULAR MUSIC.

MARTY ROBBINS WAS ONE
OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL.

STUART: I'M NAMED
AFTER MARTY ROBBINS.

HE WAS MY MAMA'S
FAVORITE SINGER,

AND I THOUGHT HE WAS
A ROCK SINGER,

AND THEN I FOUND OUT
HE WAS A COUNTRY SINGER.

THEN I FOUND OUT HE
WAS ALL OF THAT.

ROBBINS: A WHITE SPORT COAT

AND A PINK CARNATION

NARRATOR: "A WHITE SPORT COAT
(AND A PINK CARNATION)"

BECAME A NUMBER-ONE
COUNTRY HIT

AND REACHED NUMBER TWO
ON THE POP CHARTS.

THE LOUVIN BROTHERS: IF I
COULD ONLY WIN YOUR LOVE...

NARRATOR: THE LOUVIN BROTHERS,
IRA AND CHARLIE,

CAME FROM THE HILL COUNTRY
OF NORTHEASTERN ALABAMA,

WHERE THEY GREW UP STEEPED
IN GOSPEL AND BLUEGRASS MUSIC.

LOUVIN BROTHERS:
MY HEART WOULD NEVER STRAY

ONE DREAM AWAY...

NARRATOR: THEY MIXED THEIR OWN
HIGH LONESOME VOCALS

WITH A MORE MODERN
ACCOMPANIMENT

THAT INCLUDED
AN ELECTRIC GUITAR AND DRUM...

LOUVIN BROTHERS:
âa TO MAKE IT LIVE...

NARRATOR: AND SHOWED THAT
TRADITIONAL BROTHER HARMONIES

COULD SURVIVE IN THE AGE
OF ROCK AND ROLL.

âa

IN 1957, TWO OTHER BROTHERS
FROM KENTUCKY

HAD BEEN TRYING WITHOUT
MUCH SUCCESS TO MAKE IT

AS A COUNTRY DUO AND WERE
THINKING OF CALLING IT QUILTS.

ONE DAY, THEIR FATHER,
A BARBER,

WAS TALKING ABOUT HIS SONS
WHILE CUTTING THE HAIR

OF BOUDLEAUX BRYANT,
WHO, WITH HIS WIFE FELICE,

WERE AMONG THE FIRST
PROFESSIONAL SONGWRITERS

TO ESTABLISH THEMSELVES
IN NASHVILLE.

DEL BRYANT: USED TO TELL MY DAD
ABOUT HIS BOYS AND SAID,

"YOU KNOW, I'VE GOT TWO BOYS,
AND THEY REALLY SING WELL.

I REALLY WISH YOU WOULD
LISTEN TO THEM."

MY FATHER WOULD SAY,
"YEAH, YEAH.

I'D LIKE TO LISTEN TO THEM.
A LITTLE SHORTER HERE, PLEASE."

NARRATOR: AS IT TURNED OUT,
THE BRYANTS HAD WRITTEN A SONG

MEANT FOR TWO-PART HARMONY,

BUT IT HAD BEEN TURNED DOWN
BY DOZENS OF ARTISTS.

ITS TITLE WAS "BYE BYE LOVE."

THE BARBER'S BOYS,
DON AND PHIL EVERLY,

DECIDED TO RECORD IT.

EVERLY BROTHERS:
â BYE-BYE, LOVE

â BYE-BYE,
HAPPINESS â

â HELLO, LONELINESS

â I THINK I'M GONNA CRY

â BYE-BYE LOVE...

NARRATOR: THE EVERLY BROTHERS
WERE ON A MONTH-LONG TOUR

MAKING ONLY \$90 A WEEK

DOING TENT SHOWS IN MISSISSIPPI
AND LOUISIANA WITH BILL MONROE

WHEN THE SONG EXPLODED
ON THE RADIO.

PAUL SIMON: I WENT TO BUY
"BYE BYE LOVE"

RIGHT AFTER I HEARD IT.

THERE WASN'T ANY RECORD STORE
IN MY IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORHOOD,

SO I HAD TO TAKE A BUS AND THEN
ANOTHER BUS, TWO BUSES,

TO GET TO A RECORD STORE,
BOUGHT IT, CAME HOME,

PUT IT ON MY PLAYER,

LOVED IT, FLIPPED IT OVER,
PLAYED THE OTHER SIDE,

LOVED IT,
WENT TO PLAY IT AGAIN,

SCRATCHED THE RECORD,
JUST MORTIFIED.

GOT BACK ON THE BUS,

TOOK THE SECOND BUS,
WENT AND BOUGHT ANOTHER RECORD,

COULDN'T, LIKE, EVEN WAIT
FOR THE NEXT DAY.

I HAD TO HAVE IT AGAIN.

I MEAN, IT WAS, LIKE,
AN HOUR RIDE

AND THEN AN HOUR RIDE BACK,
AND THEN I SHOWED IT TO ARTIE,

AND, YOU KNOW,
WE TRIED TO FIGURE OUT

HOW THEY WERE SINGING.

âa BYE-BYE, LOVE...

NARRATOR: WITH MORE SONGS
WRITTEN BY FELICE

AND BOUDLEAUX BRYANT--INCLUDING
"WAKE UP LITTLE SUSIE,"

"ALL I HAVE TO DO IS DREAM,"
AND "BIRD DOG"--

THE EVERLY BROTHERS WOULD SELL
MORE THAN 30 MILLION RECORDS

WORLDWIDE IN 3 YEARS.

[APPLAUSE]

STUBBS: COUNTRY MUSIC WASN'T
ALWAYS RECORDED IN NASHVILLE.

THE MAJOR LABEL COMPANIES
HAD STUDIOS IN NEW YORK,

CHICAGO, THE WEST COAST,
AND IN SOME CASES,

THEY WOULD GO TO DALLAS, TEXAS,
AND RECORD, AS WELL,

BUT WHEN THE BRADLEYS,
OWEN AND HAROLD BRADLEY,

OPENED THEIR STUDIO,
EVERYTHING CHANGED HERE.

MY BROTHER OWEN
IS THE BIG DADDY.

HE SAW THE BIG PICTURE.
HE'S THE ARCHITECT.

NARRATOR: OWEN BRADLEY,
AN ACCOMPLISHED PIANIST,

HAD LED WSM's 26-PIECE
BIG BAND ORCHESTRA.

HIS YOUNGER BROTHER HAROLD
PLAYED GUITAR

AND AS A TEENAGER HAD JOINED
ERNEST TUBB'S BAND.

WHEN DECCA RECORDS ANNOUNCED
THEIR INTENTION TO RECORD

ALL THEIR ARTISTS IN DALLAS,
THE BRADLEYS DECIDED TO BUILD

A BIGGER, NEWER STUDIO
OF THEIR OWN IN NASHVILLE

TO TRY TO KEEP
DECCA'S BUSINESS.

THEY EVENTUALLY FOUND A HOUSE

IN A DECAYING
RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD

ON 16th AVENUE
SOUTHWEST OF DOWNTOWN,

GUTTED IT, AND, IN 1955,
OPENED A STUDIO

IN WHAT HAD BEEN ITS BASEMENT.

DECCA CHOSE TO STAY, AND SOON,

OTHER LABELS BEGAN USING
THE BRADLEYS' STUDIO.

BUSINESS WAS SO GOOD,
THEY ERECTED

A MILITARY-SURPLUS QUONSET HUT
IN THE BACK YARD

AND EQUIPPED IT
AS A SECOND STUDIO.

[CHET ATKINS' "CANNED HEAT"
PLAYING]

THEN RCA VICTOR BUILT
A NEW STUDIO NEARBY

ON 17th AVENUE, WHICH WOULD BE
RUN BY PRODUCER CHET ATKINS.

BEFORE LONG,
ATKINS AND THE BRADLEYS

WERE BUSY MAKING RECORDS,

AND OTHER HOUSES
IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

WERE BEING CONVERTED INTO
OFFICES OF MUSIC PUBLISHERS.

EVENTUALLY, THE AREA WOULD
BECOME KNOWN AS MUSIC ROW.

AMONG THE SONGWRITERS WHO
NOW GRAVITATED TO NASHVILLE

WAS MEL TILLIS, WHO HAD
GROWN UP IN RURAL FLORIDA

AND DISCOVERED THAT MUSIC
AND A SENSE OF HUMOR

HELPED HIM COPE
WITH A SPEECH DISORDER.

TILLIS: MY DADDY
STUTTERED A LITTLE BIT,

AND MY BROTHER STUTTERED
A LITTLE BIT TOO,

AND I THOUGHT, "WELL,
THAT'S THE WAY WE TALK,"

AND I STARTED TO SCHOOL,

FIRST GRADE
AT WOODROW ELEMENTARY,

PLANT CITY, FLORIDA,

AND I CAME HOME THE FIRST DAY,

AND I SAID,
"MAMA, DO I STUTTER?"

AND SHE SAID,
"YES. YOU DO, SON,"

AND I SAID,
"MAMA, THEY LAUGHED AT ME,"

AND SHE SAID, "WELL,
IF THEY'RE GONNA LAUGH AT YOU,

GIVE THEM SOMETHING
TO LAUGH ABOUT,"

AND THAT WAS MY FIRST DAY,
I THINK, IN SHOW BUSINESS.

HA HA HA!

MY TEACHER FOUND OUT THAT I
COULD SING WITHOUT STUTTERING,

AND SHE'D TAKE ME AROUND
TO THE OTHER CLASSES,

UP TO THE SIXTH GRADE,
AND LET ME SING.

NARRATOR: A YEAR AFTER TILLIS
CAME TO NASHVILLE,

WHERE HE HELPED SUPPORT HIMSELF
TOURING WITH MINNIE PEARL,

ANOTHER ASPIRING SINGER-
SONGWRITER ARRIVED IN TOWN.

ROGER MILLER HAD GROWN UP
IN ERICK, OKLAHOMA,

A TOWN SO SMALL,
HE LATER REMEMBERED,

"WE DIDN'T HAVE A TOWN DRUNK,
SO WE HAD TO TAKE TURNS."

AS A BOY, HE WROTE POEMS
AND SILLY SONGS,

LEARNED TO PLAY THE FIDDLE,

AND DREAMED OF LEAVING
FARM LIFE FAR BEHIND.

IN 1957,
HE MOVED TO NASHVILLE,

TOOK A JOB AS A BELLHOP
AT THE ANDREW JACKSON HOTEL,

AND STRUGGLED TO SELL
HIS COMPOSITIONS ON MUSIC ROW.

HE WAS STANDING IN THERE
WITH A--

HAD ON A LITTLE MONKEY OUTFIT.

HE WAS A BELLHOP,

AND I ASKED HIM, I SAID,
"YOU WANT A JOB?"

HE SAID, "WITH WHO?"
AND I SAID, "MINNIE PEARL."

HE SAID,
"HOW MUCH DOES IT PAY?"

I SAID, "\$18 A DAY.

IF YOU DO TWO SHOWS,
YOU GET 36."

I SAID, "WHERE ARE YOU GOING?"

HE SAID, "I'M GOING TO GIVE

THE ANDREW JACKSON
MY TWO-MINUTE NOTICE."

NARRATOR: TILLIS AND MILLER
BECAME CLOSE FRIENDS

AS THEY HUSTLED TO FIND WORK.

I TOLD HIM, I SAID, "YOU AIN'T
NEVER GOING TO MAKE IT,"

YOU KNOW, "WRITING THEM OLD,
STUPID SONGS YOU'RE WRITING."

HE SAID,
"YOU AIN'T GONNA MAKE IT

WITH THAT DAMN STUTTER,
EITHER."

HA HA HA! OH...

PATSY CLINE: â I GOT AS FEELING
'CAUSE I'M BLUE â

â OH, LORD, SINCE MY DADDY
SAID GOOD-BYE â

â I DON'T KNOW
WHAT I'M GONNA DO â

â ALL I DO IS SIT AND CRY,
OH, LORD â

â THAT LAST LONG DAY
HE SAID GOOD-BYE â

â WELL, LORD,
I THOUGHT I WOULD DIE â

â HE'LL DO YOU, HE'LL DO ME,
HE'S GOT THAT KIND OF LOVIN' â

â BUT, LORD,
I LOVE TO HEAR HIM â

â WHEN HE CALLS ME
SWEET BABY... â

NARRATOR: WHEN SHE MOVED
TO NASHVILLE IN 1959,

PATSY CLINE SEEMED MORE LIKE
A THROWBACK

TO COUNTRY MUSIC'S PAST
THAN A BRIDGE TO ITS FUTURE.

MANY OF HER SONGS HAD
HONKY TONK THEMES LIKE CHEATING.

SHE COULD YODEL
AS WELL AS HANK WILLIAMS,

AND SHE INTENDED TO BE
AS BIG A STAR AS HE HAD BEEN.

VIRGINIA PATTERSON HENSLEY
HAD BEEN BORN

NEAR WINCHESTER, VIRGINIA,
IN 1932

AND DROPPED OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL
AT AGE 15

AFTER HER ABUSIVE FATHER

DESERTED THE FAMILY.

CLINE: "I'VE LOVED
AND LOST AGAIN"

NARRATOR: SHE BEGAN SINGING
IN BARS AND SUPPER CLUBS

TO HELP SUPPORT HER MOTHER
AND SIBLINGS.

HER RICH VOICE
HAD A REMARKABLE POWER

THAT IMPRESSED
EVERYONE WHO HEARD IT.

CLINE: "I'VE LOVED
AND LOST AGAIN"

NARRATOR: BY 1954,
SHE WAS APPEARING REGULARLY

ON A COUNTRY TELEVISION SHOW
IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

[APPLAUSE]

SHE MARRIED A BUSINESSMAN
NAMED GERALD CLINE,

CHANGED HER FIRST NAME
TO PATSY,

AND SIGNED A RECORDING CONTRACT
WITH A SMALL INDEPENDENT LABEL,

4 STAR, WHICH SHE LATER LEARNED

WAS NOTORIOUS AMONG INSIDERS
FOR CHEATING ITS ARTISTS,

BUT THE STUDIO IT USED
WAS IN NASHVILLE,

WHERE OWEN BRADLEY INSTANTLY
RECOGNIZED HER TALENT

DESPITE THE MEDIOCRE SONGS HER
CONTRACT REQUIRED HER TO SING.

CLINE: "PEOPLE POINT US OUT

" AND SHAKE THEIR HEADS
IN SHAME..."

HAROLD BRADLEY: WE TRIED ROCK

AND ROLL ON THE COUNTRY SONGS.

WE TRIED WESTERN SWING.

WE TRIED A POP
PIANO SOUND ON IT.

THEY TRIED EVERYTHING,
BUT THE SONGS WEREN'T THERE.

NARRATOR: AFTER A STRING
OF SINGLES FAILED TO SELL,

4 STAR INSISTED THAT
SHE RECORD A NEW SONG.

CLINE RESISTED AT FIRST.

"IT'S NOTHING BUT A LITTLE,
OLD POP SONG," SHE SAID,

"I HATE IT,"

BUT UNDER OWEN BRADLEY'S
GUIDANCE, SHE TURNED

"WALKIN' AFTER MIDNIGHT"
INTO SOMETHING SPECIAL.

SHE SANG IT
ON A TELEVISED TALENT SHOW,

AND THE EXPOSURE
PUSHED THE SONG

TO NUMBER TWO ON THE CHARTS.

â I GO OUT WALKIN'
AFTER MIDNIGHT â

â OUT IN THE MOONLIGHT
JUST LIKE WE USED TO DO â

â I'M ALWAYS WALKIN'
AFTER MIDNIGHT â

â SEARCHIN' FOR YOU...

NARRATOR:
DIVORCED FROM GERALD CLINE,

SHE REMARRIED
AND HAD A DAUGHTER.

THE GRAND OLE OPRY OFFERED HER
A SPOT IN ITS CAST.

ON TOUR, SHE QUICKLY
BECAME KNOWN

NOT JUST FOR HER
POWERFUL VOICE,

BUT ALSO FOR HER EQUALLY
POWERFUL PERSONALITY.

SHE ARGUED WITH EVERYONE,
SWORE LIKE A SAILOR,

WALKED OUT OF CONCERTS
IF PROMOTERS

DIDN'T PAY HER
AND HER BAND ON TIME.

â€” I'M LONESOME AS I CAN BE

â€” I GO OUT WALKIN'...

LEE: AH, YEAH.
WELL, LET ME TELL YOU,

YOU DIDN'T MESS WITH PATSY.

SHE'D TELL YOU IN A NEW YORK
MINUTE WHAT SHE THOUGHT

AND WHAT SHE WAS GONNA DO
AND HOW IT WAS GONNA BE DONE.

NARRATOR: AMONG THOSE
TRAVELING WITH HER

WAS THE SINGING PRODIGY
BRENDA LEE.

SHE HAD BEEN BORN IN 1944 IN
A CHARITY HOSPITAL IN GEORGIA

INTO A FAMILY OF SHARECROPPERS.

LEE:
â€” ONE STEP AT A TIME, BOY

â€” JUST ONE STEP AT A TIME

â€” WELL, THERE'S JUST ONE WAY,
BOY, TO BE A MAN â€”

â€” START OUT YOUNG
AND GO AS FAST AS YOU CAN â€”

â€” AND IF YOU WANT TO GROW UP
TO BE A RIPE, OLD AGE â€”

â STICK TO THE BOOK
AND LIVE IT PAGE BY PAGE â

â JUST ONE STEP
AT A TIME, BOY... â

I STARTED SINGING
PROFESSIONALLY WHEN I WAS 7.

MY DAD DIED WHEN I WAS 7, AND I
BECAME THE PRIMARY BREADWINNER.

MY MOM WAS WORKING ODD JOBS
AND DOING ALL THAT SHE COULD,

WORKING IN A COTTON MILL
16 HOURS A DAY.

MY GOAL WAS TO HELP MY MOM
AND MY SIBLINGS

GET OUT OF THE SITUATION
THAT WE WERE IN.

â JUST ONE STEP
AT A TIME â

CHORUS: â JUST ONE
STEP AT A TIME â

[APPLAUSE]

NARRATOR: SHE BELTED OUT
HANK WILLIAMS SONGS IN A VOICE

THAT BELIED HER AGE
AND TINY STATURE,

WORKING SO MANY LATE NIGHTS,
HER THIRD GRADE TEACHER

SOMETIMES LET BRENDA
PUT HER HEAD ON HER DESK

AND NAP DURING CLASS.

LEE: â WE GOTTA GO,
ME, OH, MY, OH... â

NARRATOR: IN 1956,
HER TELEVISION APPEARANCES

ON ABC's "OZARK JUBILEE" LANDED
HER A CONTRACT WITH DECCA,

AND HER FAMILY

MOVED TO NASHVILLE,

WHERE OWEN BRADLEY
BECAME HER PRODUCER.

HAROLD BRADLEY: WE STARTED
RECORDING HER WHEN SHE WAS 11

OR 12 YEARS OLD,
SO WE WERE CUTTING ONE DAY,

AND WE STARTED AND
HARDLY PLAYED JUST 8 BARS,

AND SHE STOPPED, AND MY BROTHER
SAID, "HEY, WHAT'S WRONG?"

SHE SAID, "BASS PLAYER
MISSED A NOTE."

NARRATOR: HER FIRST SINGLE
WAS "JAMBALAYA,"

AND WITH HER MOTHER ALONG
TO CHAPERONE,

SHE SOON BEGAN TOURING
ON PACKAGE SHOWS

THAT INCLUDED EVERYONE
FROM KITTY WELLS

TO CHUCK BERRY
AND PATSY CLINE.

["JAMBALAYA" PLAYING]

[PATSY CLINE'S "I CRIED ALL
THE WAY TO THE ALTAR" PLAYING]

LEE: I DID MY FIRST
BIG COUNTRY TOUR.

I WAS GOING ON 11.

IT WAS PATSY CLINE,
GEORGE JONES,

MEL TILLIS, FARON YOUNG,
THE LOUVIN BROTHERS.

I THINK THAT WAS ALL,

AND IF YOU DON'T THINK
I GOT AN EDUCATION--

MEL TILLIS DROVE THE CAR...

BACK THEN,
WE DIDN'T HAVE BUSES.

WE ALL WERE IN STATION WAGONS
OR CARS OR WHATEVER.

I WAS DRIVING, AND BRENDA LEE'S
IN THE BACK SEAT,

AND WE'D BE OUT IN THE DESERT,
YOU KNOW, SOMEWHERE

AT NIGHTTIME,
AT 3:00 IN THE MORNING,

AND SHE'D STAND UP THERE AND
PUT HER ARMS ON THE BACK SEAT,

YOU KNOW, AND TELL ME
LITTLE JOKES AND STUFF.

SHE'D KEEP ME AWAKE,
LITTLE BRENDA.

CLINE: â€œ I CRIED
ALL THE WAY TO THE ALTAR... â€œ

AND I GOT TO BE FRIENDS
WITH PATSY, AND PATSY, I THINK,

WAS 13 YEARS OLDER THAN I WAS,
SO SHE WAS KIND OF LIKE

A BIG, OLD SISTER TO ME,
AND I'D GO TO HER HOUSE,

AND SHE'D LET ME CLOMP AROUND
IN HER COWBOY BOOTS

AND TRY HER SPANGLEDY-DANGLEDY
OUTFITS ON,

AND, BOY, I WAS IN HEAVEN,
AND SHE--

AS I LIKE TO SAY, IN
THE KINDEST SENSE OF THE WORD,

SHE WAS A GREAT BROAD.

CLINE: â€œ WRONG TO PART

[BOBBY HORTON'S
"TOM DOOLEY" PLAYING]

MALONE: I THINK

COUNTRY MUSICIANS--

REGARDLESS
OF HOW YOU DEFINE THEM,

WHETHER YOU CALL THEM
HILLBILLIES

OR COUNTRY OR WHATEVER--

THEY WERE NOT ISOLATED
FROM THE WORLD.

NOSTALGIA HAS BEEN ONE OF THE
BASIC STAPLES OF COUNTRY MUSIC

THROUGHOUT ITS HISTORY BECAUSE
THERE WAS A REALISTIC AWARENESS

THAT THE OLD WAY OF LIFE
WAS DISAPPEARING.

PEOPLE WERE MOVING
TO NEW WAYS OF LIFE.

THE VALUES, INSTITUTIONS
THAT THE PEOPLE GREW UP WITH

WERE VANISHING...

â

AND SO AS THEY RECEDED
INTO THE PAST,

THE PEOPLE BEGAN
TO COMMEMORATE THEM,

TO WRITE SONGS ABOUT THEM.

THE KINGSTON TRIO: â HANG DOWN
YOUR HEAD, TOM DOOLEY... â

NARRATOR: IN 1959,
AT THE INAUGURAL CEREMONY

OF THE GRAMMY AWARDS,
THE WINNER

FOR BEST COUNTRY AND WESTERN
PERFORMANCE WENT TO A GROUP

TOTALLY UNLIKE ANYTHING
ASSOCIATED WITH NASHVILLE.

KINGSTON TRIO: â HANG DOWN
YOUR HEAD, TOM DOOLEY... â

NARRATOR: IT WAS
THE KINGSTON TRIO,

3 CLEAN-CUT COLLEGE GRADUATES,

SINGING AN OLD MURDER BALLAD
FROM NORTH CAROLINA.

IT HAD FIRST BEEN RECORDED
IN THE 1920s.

NOW, "TOM DOOLEY"
WAS SWEEPING THE NATION.

KINGSTON TRIO: "HANG DOWN
YOUR HEAD AND CRY "

"HANG DOWN YOUR HEAD,
TOM DOOLEY... "

MALONE: IT WAS JUST
A HUGE, HUGE HIT,

AND IT SET OFF A HUNGER,
AN ENTHUSIASM FOR OLD SONGS,

BOTH REAL AND NEWLY MADE.

[PLAYING "EL PASO"]

" OUT IN THE WEST TEXAS TOWN
OF EL PASO "

" I FELL IN LOVE
WITH A MEXICAN GIRL... "

NARRATOR: WHEN MARTY ROBBINS
WROTE HIS WESTERN BALLAD

"EL PASO,"
HE TOLD HIS PRODUCER,

"THIS WON'T SELL 500 RECORDS,

BUT IT'S SOMETHING
I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO DO."

ROBBINS HAD GROWN UP IN AN
IMPOVERISHED BARRIO IN ARIZONA

LISTENING TO HIS MATERNAL
GRANDFATHER'S STORIES

ABOUT COWBOYS AND LEARNING
TO LOVE MEXICAN CORRIDO MUSIC.

HE NAMED THE WOMAN
IN HIS SONG FALEENA

IN HONOR OF A GIRL
HE HAD MET IN FIFTH GRADE.

ROBBINS: "FROM OUT OF NOWHERE,
FALEENA HAS FOUND ME..."

NARRATOR: ROBBINS' LABEL
TOLD HIM THAT AT 4 1/2 MINUTES,

THE SONG WAS MUCH TOO LONG

EVER TO BE PLAYED
ON THE RADIO...

"SOMETHING IS DREADFULLY
WRONG, FOR I FEEL "

" A DEEP, BURNING PAIN
IN MY SIDE..."

NARRATOR: BUT AS 1959 ENDED,
"EL PASO" WAS HEADED

TO NUMBER ONE ON THE COUNTRY
AND POP CHARTS.

6 OF THE TOP 10 COUNTRY SONGS
THAT YEAR HAD BEEN STORY SONGS.

[APPLAUSE]

"

LEFTY FRIZZELL:
" 10 YEARS AGO

" ON A COLD, DARK NIGHT

" THERE WAS SOMEONE KILLED
'NEATH THE TOWN HALL LIGHT..."

NARRATOR: LEFTY FRIZZELL HAD
ONCE CHALLENGED HANK WILLIAMS

FOR SUPREMACY IN THE WORLD
OF HONKY TONK,

BUT AS ROCK AND ROLL TOOK OFF,
HE HAD FAILED TO CHART A HIT.

NOW HE HAD ONE.

HIS NEW SONG SEEMED TO SPRING
FROM ANOTHER CENTURY

BUT, IN FACT,
HAD JUST BEEN WRITTEN

BY DANNY DILL
AND MARIJOHN WILKIN.

STUART: I LOVED ROCK AND ROLL,
BUT THAT WAS THE KIND OF SONG
THAT CAPTIVATED MY HEART.

IT MADE ME WANT TO PLAY
COUNTRY MUSIC.

IT KNEW MORE ABOUT ME
THAN I KNEW ABOUT IT.

FRIZZELL: "THE JUDGE SAID,
"SON, WHAT IS YOUR ALIBI?"

"IF YOU WERE SOMEWHERE ELSE

THEN YOU WON'T HAVE TO DIE"

"I SPOKE NOT A WORD

THOUGH IT MEANT MY LIFE

FOR I HAD BEEN IN THE ARMS

OF MY BEST FRIEND'S WIFE

SHE WALKS THESE HILLS

IN A LONG, BLACK VEIL

SHE VISITS MY GRAVE

WHEN THE NIGHT WINDS WAIL

NOBODY KNOWS

NOBODY
SEES

NOBODY KNOWS BUT ME

ROSANNE CASH:
"LONG BLACK VEIL," I THOUGHT,
WAS A PERFECT COUNTRY SONG.

IT HAD EVERYTHING.

IT WAS A GHOST STORY.

THE SCENE WAS LAID OUT.

THERE WAS A DEATH,
THE SCAFFOLD, THE JUDGE,

HER VEIL, THE GRAVEYARD.

I MEAN, IT WAS CHILLING
IN EVERY WAY.

IT'S LIKE STEPHEN FOSTER'S
"HARD TIMES."

IT'S BEDROCK.

YOU CAN'T IMAGINE THE FABRIC
OF MUSIC WITHOUT THESE SONGS.

FRIZZELL:
"NOBODY KNOWS BUT ME

"MM MM MM MM..."

[CAMERA SHUTTER CLICKS]

NARRATOR: BY 1959,
JOHNNY CASH WAS A STAR,

AND HE HAD MOVED VIVIAN
AND HIS GROWING FAMILY

FROM MEMPHIS TO A SPRAWLING
HOUSE IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.

ONLY 5 YEARS EARLIER,
HE HAD BEEN MAKING \$50 A WEEK

AS AN APPLIANCE SALESMAN.

NOW HE WAS ON TRACK TO BRING IN
250,000 A YEAR.

CASH HAD LEFT SUN RECORDS
TO SIGN WITH COLUMBIA,

A BIGGER LABEL THAT NOT ONLY
PROMISED HIM A \$50,000 BONUS

AND A BETTER ROYALTY RATE,

BUT ALSO GREATER
CREATIVE FREEDOM

IN CHOOSING WHAT SONGS
TO RECORD.

JOHNNY CASH: "I LOOKED OVER

JORDAN, AND WHAT DID I SEE

COMING FOR TO CARRY
ME HOME...

NARRATOR: AND JUST AS HE
HAD PROMISED HIS MOTHER

AFTER HIS BROTHER
JACK'S DEATH,

HE WAS ABLE TO RELEASE AN ALBUM
OF GOSPEL SONGS.

JOHNNY CASH: SWING LOW

CHORUS: SWING LOW

SWEET CHARIOT

CHARIOT

COMING FOR TO
CARRY ME HOME...

NARRATOR: HE SOON FOLLOWED IT
WITH HIS FIRST CONCEPT ALBUM,

"SONGS OF OUR SOIL,"

FILLED WITH STORIES OF
HARDSHIP AND DEATH.

JOHNNY CASH: TELL ALL
MY FRIENDS...

JACK'S DEATH
WAS CENTRAL TO EVERYTHING.

EVEN IN THE END OF
MY GRANDMOTHER'S LIFE,

MY DAD WENT UP EVERY YEAR ON
THE DAY OF JACK'S DEATH

AND SAT WITH HIS
MOTHER ALL DAY,

AND THEY JUST
SAT TOGETHER.

AND DAD ALWAYS SAID THAT HE
DREAMED OF JACK HIS WHOLE LIFE

AND JACK WOULD
AGE AS HE DID.

JACK WAS ALWAYS
TWO YEARS OLDER THAN HE WAS.

JOHNNY CASH:
"...ME HOME

NARRATOR: LIKE EVERY
OTHER SINGING STAR,

CASH SPENT MOST
OF HIS TIME TRAVELING

FROM ONE PERFORMANCE
TO ANOTHER.

EVERY NIGHT, HE WOULD CALL
VIVIAN TO SAY HOW MUCH HE
MISSED HER AND THE GIRLS,

TO REASSURE HER THAT HE WAS
BEING FAITHFUL,

THOUGH IN TRUTH, MARSHALL GRANT
FOUND IT NECESSARY

TO CONSTANTLY REMIND HIS FRIEND
THAT HE WAS A MARRIED MAN,

BUT THE ROAD, CASH SAID,

"MEANT ADVENTURE, CREATIVITY,
AND FREEDOM."

[CROWD CHEERING]

"NOW I TAUGHT THE WEEPING
WILLOW HOW TO CRY"

"AND I SHOWED THE CLOUDS
HOW TO COVER UP"

"A CLEAR, BLUE SKY...

ROSANNE CASH: HE WAS
ADDICTED TO IT, YOU KNOW.

IF HE WAS HOME MORE
THAN 10 DAYS,

HE STARTED TO GET VERY
RESTLESS,

HAD TO GET BACK OUT
THERE AGAIN.

THEY WOULD GET IN A CAR AND
DRIVE 200 MILES AND DO A SHOW,

SOMETIMES DRIVE AND DO
TWO, 3, 4 SHOWS A DAY,

THEN DRIVE ALL NIGHT,
GET SOMEPLACE,

DO IT AGAIN,
AFTERNOON SHOW,

EVENING SHOW,
DRIVE ALL NIGHT,

OVER AND OVER.

WELL, SOMEBODY FINALLY SAID
TO DAD, YOU KNOW,

WHEN HE WAS AT
THE POINT OF UTTER EXHAUSTION,

"HERE'S HOW YOU GET THROUGH IT.
YOU TAKE THIS PILL."

THAT WAS IT.

THAT'S HOW HE
GOT THROUGH IT.

NARRATOR: ONE OF CASH'S
SIGNATURE SONGS

WAS "FOLSOM PRISON BLUES."

MANY FANS ASSUMED THE SONG
HAD BEEN DRAWN

FROM HIS OWN
PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.

CASH HAD NEVER SERVED
TIME IN PRISON,

BUT FELT A SPECIAL
CONNECTION WITH THOSE WHO HAD.

â BUT I SHOT A MAN IN RENO

â JUST TO WATCH HIM DIE

NARRATOR:
ON NEW YEAR'S DAY 1959,

CASH PERFORMED THAT AT
CALIFORNIA'S MAXIMUM-SECURITY

FACILITY AT SAN QUENTIN.

SITTING IN THE AUDIENCE
WAS A YOUNG INMATE

WHO HAD ALREADY BUSTED
OUT OF JUVENILE DETENTION
CENTERS 17 TIMES.

MERLE HAGGARD: JOHNNY CASH HAD
BLOWN HIS VOICE THE NIGHT BEFORE

AT A NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY IN
SAN FRANCISCO AND HE DIDN'T...

HAD NOTHING BUT A WHISPER,
BUT WITH THAT ONLY,

HE WAS ABLE TO
TOTALLY SUBDUE THE CROWD

AND JUST--AND IN
COMPETITION WITH STRIPPERS

AND ALL KINDS OF THINGS,
8-HOUR SHOW,

AND I WAS REALLY WORRIED
FOR HIM

BECAUSE MEN ARE CRUEL
IN SAN QUENTIN.

THEY DON'T APPLAUD UNLESS
THEY LIKE YOU.

BUT THEY
WERE CRAZY ABOUT HIM.

JOHNNY CASH: "WELL, IF THEY
FREED ME FROM THIS PRISON "

" IF THAT RAILROAD
TRAIN WAS MINE "

" I BET I'D MOVE IT ALL
A LITTLE FURTHER DOWN THE LINE "

" FAR FROM FOLSOM PRISON

" THAT'S WHERE I WANT
TO STAY... "

HAGGARD:
HE IDENTIFIED WITH US,

AND HE WAS THE KIND OF GUY

THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN
IN THERE WITH US

HAD THINGS GONE THE WRONG WAY
FOR HIM.

NARRATOR: MERLE HAGGARD
DECIDED THAT IF HE
EVER GOT OUT OF PRISON,

HE WOULD TRY TO FOLLOW IN JOHNNY
CASH'S FOOTSTEPS.

[CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

["DEVOTED TO YOU" BY
THE EVERLY BROTHERS PLAYING]

EVERLY BROTHERS: "DARLING,
YOU CAN COUNT ON ME..."

BRYANT: MY PARENTS PROBABLY
COULD NOT HAVE MADE IT

IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRY THAT
THEY CHOSE TO OPERATE IN

IF THEY HADN'T LOVED EACH OTHER
SO DEARLY.

EVERLY BROTHERS:
"...ALWAYS BE

"DEVOTED...

SHE GAVE HIM
INCREDIBLE IDEAS.

SHE HAD A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT
OF TALENT, HE COULD POLISH,

HE COULD FINISH,

AND SHE MADE HIM
FINISH AND KEPT HIM EXCITED.

MY MOTHER WANTED IT MORE
THAN MY FATHER.

MY FATHER WANTED MY MOTHER
MORE THAN ANYTHING.

EVERLY BROTHERS:
"DEVOTED TO YOU

NARRATOR: BOUDLEAUX
AND FELICE BRYANT'S SUCCESS

WRITING HIT SONGS FOR THE EVERLY
BROTHERS HAD ALLOWED THEM

TO MOVE FROM A TINY TRAILER

ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF NASHVILLE
INTO A REAL HOUSE,

AND MORE ARTISTS WERE NOW
INTERESTED

IN WHAT THEY COULD OFFER.

BOUDLEAUX HAD ONCE WRITTEN
SONG IDEAS ON SCRAPS OF PAPER

HE STUFFED IN HIS POCKETS,

UNTIL ONE DAY, 14 NEW SONGS
WERE LOST

WHEN HIS RAINCOAT
DISAPPEARED.

HIS FRIEND CHET ATKINS BOUGHT
HIM A LEATHER-BOUND LEDGER,

SIMILAR TO THE KIND STEPHEN
FOSTER HAD USED, HE SAID,

AND THE BRYANTS BECAME MORE
SYSTEMATIC ABOUT THEIR WRITING,

FILLING LEDGER AFTER
LEDGER WITH SONGS THEY PITCHED

TO PRODUCERS AND ARTISTS
IN A SETTING

THAT ALWAYS WORKED FOR THEM,

OVER A STEAMING PLATE OF
FELICE'S SPAGHETTI.

BRYANT: THERE WEREN'T
MANY SICILIANS IN NASHVILLE,

AND SHE WAS
AN INCREDIBLE COOK.

SO THE FIXINGS WERE THERE.

THE FOLKS WOULD ARRIVE.
THE WINE WOULD BE POURED.

THE PEOPLE WERE JUST WAITING

FOR THE MEAL

BECAUSE YOU COULD
SMELL IT THROUGHOUT THE HOUSE,

AND NO ONE HAD HAD FOOD
LIKE THIS,

THIS GOOD OF THAT TYPE.

AND SO YOU'D EAT,
YOU WOULD DRINK,

AND THEN THEY WOULD BRING OUT
THEIR BOOKS,

THE LEDGERS THAT
THEY WROTE IN.

HE WOULD FIND SOMETHING
THEY LIKED.

THEY REALLY SOLD HARD
AND FED WELL.

NARRATOR: OVER TIME, MORE
THAN 900 OF THE BRYANTS' SONGS

WOULD BE RECORDED,

SELLING MORE THAN HALF
A BILLION RECORDS WORLDWIDE.

MEANWHILE, OTHER
WRITERS IN NASHVILLE

PUSHED THEIR WORK AT A HANGOUT
ON LOWER BROADWAY

CALLED TOOTSIE'S ORCHID
LOUNGE.

ITS BACK DOOR OPENED
ONTO THE ALLEYWAY

NEAR THE ARTISTS' ENTRANCE TO
THE RYMAN AUDITORIUM.

HATTIE LOUISE "TOOTSIE" BESS,
THE PROPRIETRESS,

HAD A BIG HEART
FOR SONGWRITERS,

BUT LITTLE PATIENCE FOR
TROUBLEMAKERS.

TOM T. HALL: SHE WORE HER HAIR
IN KIND OF A BUN, AS I REMEMBER,

AND KEPT A BIG HAT-PIN
IN THERE,

AND SHE'D TAKE IT,
AND IF SOMEBODY GOT OUT OF HAND,

SHE'D TAKE IT AND LEAVE ABOUT
THAT MUCH OF IT STICKING OUT,

AND SHE'D JUST WALK UP AND HIT
HIM IN THE BUTT WITH IT,

AND SHE GOT THE ATTENTION OF
SOME PRETTY ROWDY

SONGWRITERS
IN THOSE DAYS.

I NEVER GOT--
I NEVER GOT STUCK.

NARRATOR: AMONG THE NEW ARRIVALS
WHO BEGAN FREQUENTING TOOTSIE'S

WAS A 27-YEAR-OLD
FROM ABBOTT, TEXAS.

HIS NAME WAS WILLIE NELSON.

NELSON HAD GROWN UP
IN CENTRAL TEXAS

DURING THE GREAT DEPRESSION
SURROUNDED BY MUSIC.

WILLIE NELSON:
"THERE'S A FAMILY BIBLE

" ON THE TABLE...

NARRATOR: HE WOULD SIT ON
THE STOOL AS HIS GRANDMOTHER

TAUGHT HIS OLDER SISTER TO PLAY
THE FAMILY PUMP ORGAN.

AT NIGHT THE RADIO
BROUGHT HIM

THE SONGS OF HIS
FIRST MUSICAL HEROES--

GENE AUTRY, BOB WILLIS,
AND ERNEST TUBB.

NELSON: I THINK I
KNEW WHAT I WANTED TO DO
FROM THE BEGINNING,

BECAUSE I GREW UP WITH MY
SISTER BOBBIE PLAYING THE PIANO

AND ME SITTING ON A PIANO STOOL,
TRYING TO LEARN "STARDUST."

I JUST KIND OF FELT LIKE THAT'S
WHAT I WANTED TO DO,

AND IT WAS--I SEEMED TO HAVE
A TALENT FOR...

I HAD WRITTEN POEMS EARLIER,
BEFORE I COULD PLAY THE GUITAR.

NARRATOR: BY AGE 10, HE
WAS GOOD ENOUGH ON THE GUITAR

TO ACCOMPANY HIMSELF WHEN HE
SANG AT THE TOWN'S BARBERSHOP

AND TO STRUM IN A BAND THAT
PERFORMED POLKAS

AND WALTZES AT
LOCAL GATHERINGS.

BY 12, HE HAD WRITTEN ENOUGH
LYRICS TO FILL

A MAKESHIFT SONGBOOK
HE CONSTRUCTED

WITH A CARDBOARD COVER
AND STRING

HOLDING THE SHEETS
OF PAPER TOGETHER.

NELSON: I HAD WRITTEN
SOME SONGS,

AND, YOU KNOW, I
WANTED TO HAVE A SONGBOOK,

SO I PUT THEM
IN A SONGBOOK,

AND I HAD THE ARTWORK ON THERE
THAT WAS PRETTY FANCY,

YOU'LL HAVE TO ADMIT.

NARRATOR: AFTER GRADUATING
FROM HIGH SCHOOL IN 1950,

HE BEGAN A RESTLESS EXISTENCE,

WORKING AS A RADIO
DISC JOCKEY,

PERFORMING ON WEEKENDS WITH
A SERIES OF COUNTRY BANDS,

AND SOMETIMES SELLING
ENCYCLOPEDIAS, BIBLES,

AND VACUUM CLEANERS
DOOR-TO-DOOR.

HE WAS ALWAYS SHORT ON MONEY.

"I HAWKED MY GUITAR SO MANY
TIMES," HE SAID LATER,

"THE PAWNBROKER PLAYED IT BETTER
THAN I DID."

ONCE, STRAPPED FOR CASH,

HE SOLD HIS WRITING CREDIT ON
TWO SONGS FOR ONLY \$200,

GIVING UP
ALL FUTURE ROYALTIES.

ONE OF THEM, "FAMILY BIBLE,"
BECAME AN IMMEDIATE HIT

ON COUNTRY RADIO WHEN SOMEONE
ELSE RECORDED IT.

THE OTHER, "NIGHT LIFE,"

WOULD LATER GO ON TO SELL
30 MILLION RECORDS.

ENCOURAGED BY THEIR SUCCESS,

EVEN IF HE DIDN'T
PROFIT FROM THEM,

NELSON DECIDED
TO TRY NASHVILLE

AND LANDED A JOB WITH ONE
OF THE PUBLISHING COMPANIES

FOR \$50 A WEEK.

SITTING IN
A CONVERTED GARAGE,

WHICH SERVED AS HIS
WRITING SPACE,

NELSON LOOKED AROUND ONE DAY AND
ON A PIECE OF CARDBOARD

JOTTED DOWN SOME LYRICS TO A
SONG HE ENTITLED "HELLO WALLS."

THEN HE WENT TO TOOTSIE'S
ORCHID LOUNGE TO PLAY IT

FOR THE OTHER SONGWRITERS AND
SINGERS GATHERED THERE.

EMERY: PEOPLE WERE MAKING FUN
OF THE SONG.

THEY WOULD SAY
"HELLO, GLASS."

"HELLO, BEER."

"HELLO, PICTURE FRAME."

JUST ANYTHING IN THE ROOM,
"HELLO, DOORKNOB."

AND THEY WERE MAKING
FUN OF THE SONG.

WELL, FARON YOUNG THOUGHT
IT WAS A HIT,

AND SO HE RECORDED IT.

FARON YOUNG: "DOO DOO DOO,
HELLO, WALLS..."

NARRATOR: NELSON OFFERED
TO SELL COUNTRY STAR

FARON YOUNG HIS WRITING CREDIT
TO "HELLO WALLS" FOR JUST \$500.

"DON'T YOU MISS HER?"

NARRATOR: INSTEAD, YOUNG GAVE
NELSON A LOAN OF \$500,

IF HE PROMISED
NOT TO SELL IT TO ANYONE ELSE.

â AND I'LL BET YOU
DREAD TO SPEND â

â ANOTHER LONELY NIGHT
WITH ME â

CHORUS:
â BA BA BA BA

â BUT, LONELY WALLS,
I'LL KEEP YOU COMPANY â

â BA BA BA BA

NARRATOR: "HELLO WALLS" TOPPED
THE COUNTRY CHARTS,

BECAME A TOP 20 POP HIT,
AND WAS SOON COVERED

BY PERRY COMO, LAWRENCE WELK,

AND WILLIE'S HERO,
ERNEST TUBB.

WHEN HIS FIRST ROYALTY CHECK
ARRIVED FOR \$14,000,

NELSON RUSHED TO TOOTSIE'S AND
IN FRONT OF EVERYONE ELSE

GAVE FARON YOUNG A BIG KISS,
SQUARE ON THE LIPS.

YOUNG: â SHE'LL GONE
A LONG, LONG TIME â

NARRATOR: "I AIN'T NEVER
HAD NOBODY," YOUNG SAID,

"KISS ME THAT GOOD
IN MY LIFE."

[INDISTINCT CHATTER]

STUART: THE REASON
NASHVILLE NEVER GOES AWAY

AS A MUSICAL ENTITY,

REGARDLESS, IS IT HAS ITS
BUSINESS ACT TOGETHER.

IT IS A VERY
BUSINESS-MINDED TOWN.

GUITAR IN THIS HAND,

BRIEFCASE IN THIS HAND.

NARRATOR: IN 1958, A GROUP
OF INDUSTRY EXECUTIVES,

CONCERNED ABOUT THE DECLINING
NUMBER OF RADIO STATIONS

PLAYING COUNTRY AND WESTERN
RECORDS,

HAD FORMED THE COUNTRY
MUSIC ASSOCIATION, THE CMA.

JO WALKER-MEADOR,

A YOUNG COLLEGE-EDUCATED
NASHVILLE WOMAN

WHO HAD NEVER BEEN TO
THE GRAND OLE OPRY,

BECAME ITS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.

SHE HELPED PERSUADE BILLBOARD
TO REFER TO THE MUSIC

AS COUNTRY INSTEAD OF COUNTRY
AND WESTERN

AND OPENED A HALL OF FAME

TO RECOGNIZE IMPORTANT
FIGURES IN THE MUSIC'S HISTORY.

ALONG WITH THE INFLUENTIAL
SONGWRITER

AND SONG PUBLISHER,
FRED ROSE,

THE FIRST TO BE INDUCTED

WERE JIMMIE RODGERS
AND HANK WILLIAMS.

BUT BY NOW,
MOST OF THE MUSIC BEING
RECORDED IN NASHVILLE

NO LONGER SOUNDED ANYTHING LIKE
THAT OF RODGERS OR WILLIAMS.

JIM REEVES: "OUT WHERE
THE BRIGHT LIGHTS ARE GLOWING"

â YOU'RE DRAWN...

CHARLIE McCOY: THERE'S
A FINE LINE BETWEEN
ART AND BUSINESS.

SOMETIMES WE MAKE BUSINESS
DECISIONS THAT AFFECTS THE ART,

BUT WE HAVE TO KEEP IN MIND, IT
IS THE MUSIC BUSINESS.

NARRATOR: IN THEIR
RECORDING STUDIOS ON MUSIC ROW,

BOTH CHET ATKINS AND OWEN
BRADLEY HAD BEEN EXPERIMENTING

WITH WAYS TO REACH A WIDER
AUDIENCE--

ADDING A FEW SWEET VIOLINS

INSTEAD OF A HARD-DRIVING
FIDDLE,

A SOFT PIANO,

AND THE SUBDUED
BACKGROUND VOCALS

OF EITHER THE ANITA KERR SINGERS
OR THE JORDANAIRE'S QUARTET,

ALL ALLOWING THE LEAD SINGER TO
BE FRONT AND CENTER.

IT WAS CALLED
THE NASHVILLE SOUND.

REEVES: â FOR ME...

NARRATOR: "I WASN'T TRYING
TO CHANGE THE BUSINESS,"

CHET ATKINS SAID,
"JUST SELL RECORDS."

HE HELPED JIM REEVES
MAKE THE TRANSITION

FROM A HILLBILLY SINGER
DOING NOVELTY SONGS

TO A CROONER OF ACHING
HEARTBREAK.

AND OVER AT HIS
QUONSET HUT STUDIO,

OWEN BRADLEY WAS MOVING
BRENDA LEE AWAY

FROM ROCKABILLY WITH
A SONG CALLED "I'M SORRY."

LEE: I THINK ROCKABILLY WAS
MORE THAT RAW, RHYTHMIC SOUND.

â I'M SORRY...

"I'M SORRY" WAS MORE
OF YOUR UPTOWN,

BIG BALLAD, CLASSY
KIND OF A SOUND

THAT WE REALLY HADN'T DONE
IN NASHVILLE.

â I'M SORRY, SO SORRY

â THAT I WAS SUCH A FOOL

â I DIDN'T KNOW LOVE
COULD BE SO CRUEL â

â OH-OH-OH-OH

â OH-OH-OH, YES

IT'S JUST THE OH-OH, OH-OH

THAT YOU DO IN A KIND OF A SONG,
LITTLE HICCUP.

â YOU TELL ME

â MISTAKES

â ARE PART OF BEING YOUNG

â BUT LOVE WAS BLIND

â AND I WAS TOO BLIND

â TO SEE

MEN: â SORRY

NARRATOR: BY 1961,
DESPITE HER BRIEF SUCCESS

WITH "WALKIN'

AFTER MIDNIGHT,"

PATSY CLINE HADN'T HAD A HIT
IN 4 YEARS.

HER FAMILY WAS
BARELY GETTING BY.

THEY DIDN'T EVEN HAVE
A TELEPHONE.

PEOPLE WERE TOLD
THEY COULD REACH HER

BY LEAVING
A MESSAGE AT WSM,

BUT ONCE SHE WAS FREED
FROM HER CONTRACT

WITH 4 STAR RECORDS,
SHE SIGNED ON WITH DECCA.

OWEN BRADLEY IMMEDIATELY
BEGAN LOOKING FOR A SONG

THAT COULD HELP HER APPEAL TO
BOTH COUNTRY AND POP MARKETS.

HE CALLED ON TWO OF NASHVILLE'S
HOTTEST SONGWRITERS--

HANK COCHRAN
AND HARLAN HOWARD.

"THE ESSENCE OF
A GOOD COUNTRY SONG,"

HOWARD ONCE SAID, "WAS
3 CHORDS AND THE TRUTH."

THE SONG THEY WROTE WAS SET
TO A FAMILIAR COUNTRY BEAT.

CLINE HAD AT FIRST OBJECTED TO
BRADLEY'S INSISTENCE

ON THE ADDITION OF
THE JORDANAIREs,

WHOSE VOICES, SHE FEARED,
MIGHT OVERWHELM HER OWN.

PATSY CLINE: "I FALL
TO PIECES "

" EACH TIME I SEE YOU AGAIN

I WAS DRIVING INTO THE CLOSEST
LITTLE TOWN,

I HEARD THAT RECORD.

I WAS GOING THROUGH THAT.

I HAD JUST BROKEN UP
WITH THIS GUY.

I HAD GONE TO A PARTY
AND I'M--

AT FIRST,
I WASN'T GOING TO GO,

AND THEN IT'S LIKE,
"NO, I'M GOING

AND I'M GOING TO HAVE
A GOOD TIME."

WELL, I HAD A GREAT TIME
UNTIL I SAW HIM

AND THEN I JUST FELL
TO PIECES.

WHEN I HEARD THAT RECORD,
I LIKE,

"WHO KNOWS WHAT I'M JUST
LIVING THROUGH?

WHO KNOWS THAT?"

I JUST CANNOT BELIEVE THERE'S
SOMEBODY OUT THERE

THAT CAN WRITE A SONG ABOUT
HOW YOU FEEL

WHEN THEY DON'T
EVEN KNOW YOU.

NARRATOR: WITH
"I FALL TO PIECES,"

PATSY CLINE SCORED HER FIRST
NUMBER ONE COUNTRY HIT.

CLINE: "YOU WALK BY
AND I FALL TO PIECES"

RAY WALKER:
WE'RE ON A SESSION.

SHE'S UPSTAIRS WITH OWEN
IN THE CONTROL ROOM.

SHE CAME DOWN THOSE
STEPS, SASSY, SASSY.

SHE PUT HER HAND ON HER HIP,
COCKED HER HIP,

THREW HER HEAD BACK AND SAID,
"BOYS, THEY SAY I GOT A HIT.

AIN'T NOBODY TAKING MY
FRIGIDAIRE AND MY CAR NOW."

NARRATOR: AS MORE AND MORE
ARTISTS AND THEIR PRODUCERS

TURNED TO THE
NASHVILLE SOUND,

"COUNTRY MUSIC,"
"TIME" MAGAZINE NOTED,

"IS NOW WEARING
CITY CLOTHES."

THE STUDIOS ON MUSIC ROW
WERE BUSIER THAN EVER.

MANY PURISTS COMPLAINED
THAT THE DRIVE TO BECOME
MORE MAINSTREAM,

AND MORE PROFITABLE,
MEANT FORSAKING THE RAW,
HOMESPUN ROOTS

THAT HAD ALWAYS DISTINGUISHED
COUNTRY MUSIC,

BUT THERE WAS NO
DISPUTING HOW WELL IT SOLD.

"WHAT IS THE NASHVILLE SOUND?"

CHET ATKINS WAS ASKED.

HE REACHED INTO HIS POCKET
AND JINGLED HIS CHANGE.

"THAT," HE SAID, "IS
THE NASHVILLE SOUND."

JEAN SHEPARD:
â€” THE STEEL GUITAR

â PLAYED WHEN I MET HIM...

NARRATOR: SOME COUNTRY
ARTISTS STILL PREFERRED
TO STICK WITH TRADITION.

ONE OF THEM WAS
A SHARECROPPER'S DAUGHTER

FROM OKLAHOMA NAMED
JEAN SHEPARD.

SHEPARD: COUNTRY MUSIC,

IF YOU AIN'T GOT
A STEEL GUITAR

OR A FIDDLE IN YOUR BAND,

YOU AIN'T GOT NO COUNTRY BAND.

THAT'S IT.

NARRATOR: AFTER SHE
JOINED THE GRAND OLE OPRY,

SHEPARD FELL IN LOVE WITH THE
SINGER HAWKSHAW HAWKINS,

A CHARISMATIC WEST VIRGINIAN
WHO HAD EARNED

4 MEDALS FIGHTING IN
WORLD WAR II.

SHEPARD: â STEEL GUITAR...

NARRATOR: IN 1960, HE
INSISTED ON A PUBLIC WEDDING

AT ONE OF THEIR CONCERTS,

JUST LIKE HIS HERO
HANK WILLIAMS HAD DONE.

HAWKINS AND SHEPARD MOVED
TO A FARM NEAR NASHVILLE

AND SET ABOUT
RAISING A FAMILY.

HAY: THANK YOU
VERY MUCH, JOAN,

AND HOWDY, FRIENDS
AND NEIGHBORS

AND EVERYBODY HERE
IN THE OPRY HOUSE.

WE'VE GOT A GREAT,
BIG SHOW FOR YOU.

ROY ACUFF AND HIS SMOKY
MOUNTAIN BOYS TAKE THE LEAD.

ROY ACUFF: â€œ FROM THE GREAT
ATLANTIC OCEAN â€œ

â€œ TO THE WIDE PACIFIC
SHORES â€œ

â€œ FROM THE QUEEN OF
FLOWING MOUNTAINS â€œ

â€œ TO THE SOUTH BELL
BY THE SHORE â€œ

â€œ SHE'S MIGHTY TALL
AND HANDSOME â€œ

â€œ SHE'S KNOWN QUITE WELL
BY ALL â€œ

â€œ SHE'S THE COMBINATION

â€œ ON THE WABASH
CANNONBALL... â€œ

LORETTA LYNN: WELL, THERE
WAS ONE PERSON IN THAT HOLLOW

WHO HAD ONE OF THESE LITTLE
TINY RADIOS,

AND ON SATURDAY NIGHT,

EVERYBODY WOULD END UP AT
THAT ONE HOUSE,

AND WE LISTENED TO
THE GRAND OLE OPRY.

DADDY, WHEN HE
GOT HIS JOB IN THE MINES,

IN THE COAL MINES, WE GOT
A PHILCO RADIO,

AND THAT WAS THE GREATEST THING
THAT EVER HAPPENED TO US,

WAS THAT RADIO.

I'D GO TO SLEEP EVERY NIGHT
WITH THAT RADIO,

WITH A BLANKET
OVER THE TOP OF ME.

SOMETIMES I'D BE
FROZE TO DEATH,

BUT I LISTENED TO THE RADIO.

ACUFF: " ...TO THE JUNGLES
ON THE WABASH CANNONBALL "

NARRATOR: LORETTA LYNN
WAS BORN ON APRIL 14, 1932

IN A CABIN IN BUTCHER HOLLOW,
KENTUCKY.

THE OLDEST GIRL IN
A FAMILY OF 8 CHILDREN,

SHE GREW UP WEARING
DRESSES MADE FROM FLOUR SACKS

AND TENDING TO HER YOUNGER
SIBLINGS,

SINGING THEM TO SLEEP
IN A ROCKING CHAIR.

LYNN: YOU KNOW, WHEN
BILL MONROE WOULD START
TO SINGING THE BLUEGRASS,

MOMMY WOULD HIT THE
FLOOR AND START DANCING.

AND WHEN MOMMY WOULD HIT
THE FLOOR AND START DANCING,

YOU'D SEE DADDY
WITH HIS HEAD DOWN,

AND HE'D LOOK UP AND GO...

AND THEN HE'D PUT HIS HEAD
BACK DOWN.

HE WOULD GRIN, YOU KNOW, AND
PUT HIS HEAD BACK DOWN.

NARRATOR: AT AGE 15, SHE MET
OLIVER "DOOLITTLE" LYNN,

A 21-YEAR-OLD WAR VETERAN WHO
OUTBID EVERYONE ELSE

FOR HER PIE AT
A SCHOOLHOUSE SOCIAL.

HE WAS THE FIRST BOY
SHE EVER KISSED,

AND THEY MARRIED WITHIN
A MONTH.

SHE AND DOOLITTLE MOVED
TO WASHINGTON STATE,

NEAR THE CANADIAN BORDER,

WHERE HE HAD FOUND WORK
ON A RANCH,

AND SHE HAD 4 CHILDREN
IN QUICK SUCCESSION

WHILE THE COUPLE
SCRAPED TO GET BY.

HEARING HIS YOUNG WIFE
SING AROUND THE HOUSE,

DOOLITTLE BOUGHT LORETTA
A \$17 GUITAR FROM SEARS.

SHE TAUGHT HERSELF
TO PLAY IT,

COMPOSING SONGS OF HER OWN AND
PLAYING THEM TO HER CHILDREN.

LYNN: AND I'D LINE THEM UP.

I'D LINE THESE KIDS UP
AND I'D SING AND SING,

AND I'D SAY, "NOW, WHICH ONE OF
THESE SONGS DO YOU LIKE?

DO YOU THINK
MOMMY CAN SING?"

AND EVERY ONE OF THEM WOULD SAY,
"YEAH, MOMMY, YOU CAN SING."

NARRATOR: SOON SHE
WAS PERFORMING WITH
A SMALL COUNTRY BAND

FOR \$5.00 A NIGHT AT

A LOCAL TAVERN

AND WON A TALENT CONTEST
ON A TACOMA TV SHOW.

A WEALTHY LUMBERMAN OFFERED
TO FINANCE A RECORDING

OF A SONG SHE HAD WRITTEN,
"I'M A HONKY TONK GIRL."

LYNN: "A MANY NIGHT I'VE
LAID AWAKE AND CRIED "A

"A WE ONCE WERE HAPPY

"A MY HEART WAS IN A WHIRL

"A BUT NOW I'M A HONKY TONK
GIRL "A

"A SO TURN THAT...

HAGGARD: I LIKE THE
VERY FIRST RECORD SHE DID.

"A I'M JUST A
HONKY TONK GIRL "A

I THINK THAT'S THE BEST
SHE EVER SOUNDED.

I LOVE THAT RECORD.

SHE HAD AUTHENTICITY IN IT.

SHE WAS HUNGRY.

LYNN: "A NOW I'M
A HONKY TONK GIRL... "A

HAGGARD: SHE WANTED OUT OF THAT
LIFE SHE WAS IN

AND KIND OF
SUNG HER WAY OUT OF PRISON.

NARRATOR:
TO PROMOTE HER RECORD,

SHE AND DOOLITTLE
STARTED SENDING COPIES OF IT,

ALONG WITH A PHOTOGRAPH
OF LORETTA DRESSED
IN A COWGIRL OUTFIT,

TO DISC JOCKEYS AND STATION
MANAGERS AROUND THE NATION.

IN EARLY 1960, THEY
SET OFF TO DO IT IN PERSON,

GOING FROM STATION TO STATION,
SLEEPING IN THEIR CAR,

LIVING ON BALONEY
AND CHEESE SANDWICHES.

LYNN: I HAD
ONE LITTLE DRESS.

DOO GOT IT FOR ME FOR
MY SEVENTEENTH BIRTHDAY.

SO I HAD KEPT IT ALL
THIS TIME, YOU KNOW,

AND I KEPT THAT ONE DRESS SO I
COULD GO SOMEPLACE,

AND I'D GET IN
THE BACKSEAT

AND CHANGE INTO MY
LITTLE BLACK AND WHITE DRESS

AND PULL MY JEANS OFF
AND GO IN THE RADIO STATION,

AND THEN WHEN I'D COME BACK,
I'D PULL MY DRESS OFF,

HANG IT BACK UP,

AND WE'D GO ON DOWN THE ROAD TO
THE NEXT RADIO STATION.

THAT'S HOW WE DID IT.

NARRATOR:
"I'M A HONKY TONK GIRL "

HIT NUMBER 14 ON
THE COUNTRY CHARTS.

THEY DECIDED TO HEAD
FOR NASHVILLE.

THERE, SHE PESTERED OFFICIALS
AT THE GRAND OLE OPRY

UNTIL THEY GRANTED HER A SPOT
ON THE SHOW.

LYNN: âa AND NOW I'M
A HONKY TONK GIRL âa

NARRATOR: MEANWHILE, ONE OF
LORETTA'S IDOLS, PATSY CLINE,
WAS INVOLVED IN AN AUTOMOBILE
ACCIDENT

THAT KILLED TWO PEOPLE.

PATSY WAS CATAPULTED
THROUGH HER CAR'S WINDSHIELD

AND HOSPITALIZED IN CRITICAL
CONDITION

WITH BROKEN BONES,
A DISLOCATED HIP,

AND A DEEP GASH
THAT SLICED ACROSS HER FOREHEAD.

LORETTA WAS SCHEDULED TO BE ON
ERNEST TUBB'S MIDNITE JAMBOREE.

LYNN: AND I SUNG ON
THE ERNEST TUBB RECORD SHOP,

"I FALL TO PIECES"

AND DEDICATED IT TO HER
IN THE HOSPITAL.

SO SHE SENT HER HUSBAND OUT,
DOWN TO TOWN TO GET ME,

TO BRING ME
TO THE HOSPITAL,

AND THAT'S WHERE I MET HER,
WAS IN THE HOSPITAL.

NARRATOR: LORETTA AND PATSY
SOON BECAME CLOSE FRIENDS.

SHE STARTED GIVING
LYNN ADVICE ON HER CAREER,

MONEY FOR RENT,
AND NICER CLOTHES.

CLINE SLOWLY RECOVERED,

APPEARING ONCE AT
THE OPRY IN A WHEELCHAIR

TO SHOW HER FANS
SHE WAS MENDING.

[APPLAUSE]

CLINE: I'M KIND OF OUT OF WIND.

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME
I'VE WORKED

SINCE I GOT OUT OF THE
HOSPITAL.

[MAN LAUGHS]

WHAT ARE YOU LAUGHING ABOUT?
YOU WASN'T THERE.

[LAUGHTER]

OH, ME.

WE'D LIKE TO SLOW THINGS
DOWN SO I CAN GET MY BREATH.

â I MUST MAKE UP MY MIND
TODAY â

â WHAT TO HAVE,
WHAT TO HOLD... â

NARRATOR: AS SOON AS
PATSY CLINE FELT UP TO IT,

OWEN BRADLEY BROUGHT HER BACK
TO HIS STUDIO

TO RECORD A NEW ALBUM FEATURING
MORE OF THE NASHVILLE SOUND.

THE SONG THAT PRODUCED
THE ALBUM'S BIGGEST HIT

WAS A SLOW, SOFT LAMENT WILLIE
NELSON HAD WRITTEN.

HE HAD ORIGINALLY ENTITLED
THE SONG, "STUPID,"

BUT THEN
CHANGED HIS MIND.

HE CALLED IT "CRAZY."

NELSON: I WAS AT TOOTSIE'S
ORCHID LOUNGE IN NASHVILLE,

AND CHARLIE DICK,
PATSY'S HUSBAND WAS THERE.

HE AND I WERE HAVING A BEER.

I HAD A DEMO ON "CRAZY."

AND I GOT IT ON
TOOTSIE'S JUKEBOX

AND PLAYED IT,
AND HE HEARD IT

AND SAID, "THAT WOULD BE A GREAT
SONG FOR PATSY.

LET'S GO PLAY IT FOR HER."

WE WENT OVER TO HER HOUSE.

IT WAS ABOUT 12:30, 1:00
WHEN WE GOT THERE,

AND I WOULDN'T GET
OUT OF THE CAR,

SO HE WENT IN
AND PATSY CAME OUT

AND MADE ME GET OUT OF THE CAR
AND COME IN

AND LISTENED TO THE SONG.

I JUST THOUGHT IT WAS
A GOOD SONG.

YOU KNOW, WHEN YOU
WRITE ONE, YOU KNOW

WHETHER IT'S GOOD OR
WHETHER IT'S NOT GREAT,

BUT I ALWAYS THOUGHT IT WAS
A REALLY GOOD SONG,

AND I PLAYED IT FOR
PATSY CLINE

AND SHE THOUGHT IT
WAS A GREAT SONG.

NARRATOR: "I'M GLAD YOU
WOKE ME UP," PATSY SAID.

"I'M RECORDING IT."

BUT IN THE STUDIO,
AS THE MUSICIANS WORKED
ON THEIR PARTS,

PATSY WAS HAVING TROUBLE.

SHE COULDN'T GET WILLIE NELSON'S
UNIQUE PHRASING

ON HIS DEMO VERSION
OUT OF HER HEAD.

AND WILLIE HAD
RECORDED IT

â CRAZY, DU-DU BA-BING DA DONG

â CRAZY FOR FEELING
SO LONELY â

WELL, SHE GOT THAT TEMPO LOCKED
INTO HER MIND,

AND IT WAS KIND
OF WESTERN, YOU KNOW?

SO SHE CAME TO THE STUDIO
AND OWEN SLOWED IT DOWN TO

CRAZY, WHOO-HOO-HOO â

THAT'S US.

â CRAZY FOR FEELING
SO LONE â

WELL, SHE COULDN'T GET IT.

SHE HAD "DOMP-DEE, DOMP-DEE,
DOMP" IN HER MIND.

NARRATOR: OWEN BRADLEY
SENT CLINE HOME

WHILE HE AND THE MUSICIANS
FINISHED THE BACKGROUND TRACK.

TWO WEEKS LATER, SHE RETURNED
TO LAY DOWN HER VOCALS OVER IT,

AND IN HER FIRST TAKE DELIVERED
THE KIND OF PERFORMANCE

THEY HAD BEEN SEARCHING FOR.

CLINE: â CRAZY

JORDANAIRE: ♪ OOH, OOH, OOH

♪ I'M CRAZY FOR FEELING
SO LONELY ♪

♪ OOH, OOH,

♪ I'M CRAZY

♪ CRAZY FOR FEELING
SO BLUE... ♪

NARRATOR: RELEASED AS A SINGLE,
"CRAZY" QUICKLY CROSSED OVER

TO THE TOP 10
ON THE POP CHARTS,

JUST AS OWEN BRADLEY
HAD WANTED.

TRISHA YEARWOOD:
WHEN YOU HEAR HER SING,

IT SOUNDS TO ME LIKE SHE
IS IN THE ROOM, RIGHT HERE,

AND YOU FEEL THE EMOTION
IN EVERY LYRIC.

IF YOU CAN FIND THAT
PERFECT SONG

AND THEN YOU MARRY IT
WITH THAT--

WITH THE VOICE IT'S SUPPOSED TO
GO WITH, IT'S TIMELESS.

CLINE: ♪ ...YOU

♪ CRAZY

♪ FOR THINKING THAT MY LOVE
WOULD HOLD YOU ♪

♪ I'M CRAZY FOR TRYING

♪ AND CRAZY FOR CRYING

♪ AND I'M CRAZY
FOR LOVING ♪

♪ YOU

JORDANAIRE: ♪ OOH

RAY CHARLES:
"HEY, GOOD LOOKIN'

" WHATCHA GOT COOKING?

NARRATOR: BY 1962,
RAY CHARLES HAD BEEN

A RHYTHM AND BLUES STAR
FOR A DECADE,

AND WHEN HE WAS GIVEN
CREATIVE CONTROL

OF AN ALBUM FOR
THE FIRST TIME,

HE STUNNED THE MUSIC WORLD

BY CHOOSING TO RECORD
COUNTRY SONGS.

CHARLES: "I GOT
A BRAND-NEW CAR..."

RONNIE MILSAP: PEOPLE WHO
WERE CLOSE TO RAY CHARLES,

I THINK THEY WERE KIND OF
DISAPPOINTED IN THE WAY

THAT RAY HAD CHOSE THAT,

BUT RAY CHARLES LISTENS TO
THE RADIO JUST LIKE I DO.

HE LISTENED TO IT EVERY
DAY AND EVERY NIGHT.

HE KNEW WHAT WAS REALLY
THE PULSE OF WHAT
AMERICA'S ALL ABOUT...

CHARLES: "THE SPOT
RIGHT OVER THE HILL "

" THERE'S SODA POP
AND A DANCE..."

MILSAP: THESE SONGS THAT TELL
STORIES,

SO THAT'S WHAT COUNTRY
MUSIC REALLY IS.

CHARLES: " WHATCHA

GOT COOKING? â

HE'S LISTENING TO THE RADIO,

IS HE NOT GOING TO HEAR
COUNTRY MUSIC?

HE'S A SINGER.

HE'S NOT GOING TO
HEAR CHURCH MUSIC, HYMNS.

AND WE TEND TO THINK
OF IT ONE WAY,

LIKE THESE WHITE MUSICIANS HEARD
THESE BLACK MUSICIANS PLAY.

THE BLACK MUSICIANS WERE
LISTENING TO THE WHITE
MUSICIANS, TOO.

NARRATOR: "YOU TAKE
COUNTRY MUSIC,

YOU TAKE BLACK MUSIC,"
RAY CHARLES SAID,

AND "YOU GOT THE SAME GODDAMN
THING EXACTLY."

ON HIS ALBUM "MODERN SOUNDS IN
COUNTRY AND WESTERN MUSIC,"

HE CHOSE SONGS LIKE HANK
WILLIAMS' "HEY GOOD LOOKIN',"

THE EVERLY BROTHERS'
"BYE BYE LOVE."

AND A TUNE BY COUNTRY
SINGER DON GIBSON,

"I CAN'T STOP LOVING YOU."

CHORUS: â I CAN'T STOP
LOVING YOU â

[APPLAUSE]

â I'VE MADE UP MY MIND

â TO LIVE IN MEMORIES

â OF THE LONESOME TIMES...

VINCE GILL: AND YOU ASK HIM WHY

HE LIKED COUNTRY MUSIC,

HE SAID, "I LIKE THE STORIES.
I LIKE THE STORIES THEY TELL."

THAT WAS A HUGE
RECORD FOR US,

MAYBE EVEN
MORE SO THAN RAY,

FOR US TO BE ABLE
TO HANG OUR HAT

ON HOW SOULFUL THIS
MUSIC COULD BE.

CHARLES: "TO LIVE IN MEMORIES

" OF A LONESOME TIME

" YEAH, BABY, YEAH...

MILSAP: "I CAN'T STOP
LOVING YOU" HIT THE RADIO

AND THAT WHOLE SUMMER
OF 1962,

IT JUST PLAYED
ALL SUMMER LONG.

TO SELL ONE SONG,
ONE SIDE OF A 45 RECORD,

CHARTS ALL THE WAY
TO NUMBER ONE

AND SELLS 20 MILLION RECORDS,

THAT'S PRETTY BIG.

NARRATOR: AS A SINGLE,
"I CAN'T STOP LOVING YOU"

TOPPED THE CHARTS IN THE UNITED
STATES AND BRITAIN,

WON A GRAMMY FOR
BEST R&B RELEASE,

AND SOLD SO BRISKLY, ONE ATLANTA
RECORD STOREOWNER REPORTED,

"PEOPLE WHO DON'T EVEN OWN
RECORD PLAYERS ARE BUYING IT."

"RAY CHARLES,"
WILLIE NELSON SAID,

"DID MORE FOR COUNTRY MUSIC

THAN ANY ONE ARTIST HAS
EVER DONE."

CHARLES: "SO I'LL JUST
LIVE MY LIFE

" I THINK I MIGHT LIVE MY LIFE

" DREAMS OF YESTERDAY

I MEAN, MUSIC IS ALWAYS
STRIVING TO THE BEST THING,

AND THE BEST THING IS THE MIX,
YOU KNOW?

IT ALWAYS IS.

YOU HAVE THESE TWO THINGS, WHICH
ARE PRETTY COOL ON THEIR OWN.

THEN YOU PUT THEM TOGETHER
AND ALL THE STRENGTHS MULTIPLY,

YOU KNOW, AND BECOME THIS
BEAUTIFUL THING.

AND I THINK THAT'S ONE
OF THE REASONS

WHY AMERICAN MUSIC HAS
TAKEN OVER THE WORLD,

BECAUSE EVERYBODY CAN FEEL
THAT IT COMES

FROM ONE PLUS ONE EQUALS
A HUNDRED.

NARRATOR:
BY THE EARLY 1960s,

JOHNNY CASH WAS ON
THE ROAD MORE THAN EVER,

AWAY FROM HIS WIFE
AND 4 DAUGHTERS.

JOHNNY CASH: "HEAR THAT
LONESOME WHIPPOORWILL..."

NARRATOR: THE TENSIONS BETWEEN

HIM AND VIVIAN WERE PALPABLE.

"I WASN'T GOING TO GIVE UP THE
LIFE THAT WENT WITH MY MUSIC,"

CASH SAID LATER, "AND VIVIAN
WASN'T GOING TO ACCEPT THAT,

"SO THERE WE WERE,
VERY UNHAPPY.

THERE WAS ALWAYS
A BATTLE AT HOME."

CASH: "I ...I COULD CRY

ROSANNE CASH: BEING THE DAUGHTER
OF A REALLY FAMOUS GUY

WAS FRAUGHT WITH SO MUCH
ANXIETY,

PARTLY BECAUSE OF MY MOTHER.

AND SHE WAS SO AFRAID OF FAME,

AND SHE WAS AFRAID WE'D BE
KIDNAPPED,

AND SHE DIDN'T
WANT ANYTHING IN THE PAPERS,

AND SHE WANTED A QUIET LIFE,
A CONTAINED LIFE,

AND MY DAD DID NOT HAVE A QUIET
AND CONTAINED LIFE.

CASH: "THE MOON JUST WENT
BEHIND THE CLOUDS "

" TO HIDE ITS FACE AND CRY

" DID YOU EVER...

NARRATOR:
AFTER ONE ROAD TRIP,

CASH BROUGHT HIS WHOLE
BAND TO THE HOUSE,

ALONG WITH PATSY CLINE, WHO WAS
NOW PART OF HIS TOUR.

VIVIAN BECAME FRIENDS
WITH PATSY,

BUT NOT WITH ANOTHER
WOMAN ALSO APPEARING
REGULARLY WITH JOHNNY--

JUNE CARTER.

CARLENE CARTER:
A LOT OF PEOPLE WERE
IN THE DARK ABOUT IT,

BUT IT WAS PRETTY EVIDENT TO
EVEN ME, A YOUNG--A SMALL CHILD,

THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING THERE
BETWEEN THEM, A SPECIAL BOND.

NARRATOR: CASH SOON
ADDED JUNE'S MOTHER MAYBELLE

AND HER SISTERS INTO THE ACT,

AND WHEN THEY APPEARED
WITH HIM AT A BIG SHOW
AT THE HOLLYWOOD BOWL,

VIVIAN TOOK THE GIRLS TO
THE CONCERT.

AFTER IT WAS OVER,
THEY WATCHED AS JOHNNY JUMPED

INTO A WAITING CADILLAC TO
DRIVE OFF WITH JUNE.

JOHNNY CASH: "AS I WONDER
WHERE YOU..."

NARRATOR:
"THE LOOK ON VIVIAN'S FACE,"

ONE BAND MEMBER REMEMBERED,
"WAS PURE ANGUISH."

JOHNNY CASH:
"...COULD CRY

NARRATOR:
BY THE END OF 1962,

JOHNNY CASH AND JUNE CARTER'S
AFFAIR HAD DEEPENED,

BUT THEY WERE
CONFLICTED ABOUT IT.

THEY WERE BOTH STILL MARRIED TO
OTHER PEOPLE--

JUNE TO HER SECOND HUSBAND--

AND BOTH HAD CHILDREN
TO CONSIDER.

ANITA CARTER:
"A LOVE IS A BURNING THING..."

NARRATOR: JUNE POURED
HER FEELINGS INTO A NEW SONG,

CO-WRITTEN WITH MERLE KILGORE,
THAT HER SISTER ANITA RECORDED.

CARLENE CARTER:
WHEN SHE WROTE "RING OF FIRE"

IT WAS ABOUT SOMETHING REAL.

IT WAS ABOUT TRUE PASSION
AND TRUE LOVE

AND THE SCARY
FACTOR OF THAT.

YOU KNOW, "I FELL INTO A BURNING
RING OF FIRE," THAT IS SCARY.

NARRATOR: ANITA CARTER'S
"RING OF FIRE" WAS NOT A HIT,

BUT IN MARCH OF 1963,

JOHNNY CASH DECIDED
TO RECORD IT HIMSELF.

HE WANTED A FRESH SOUND,

MAYBE EVEN MEXICAN HORNS,

AND HE TURNED TO COWBOY
JACK CLEMENT,

A FRIEND FROM HIS SUN RECORD
DAYS, NOW LIVING IN TEXAS.

COWBOY JACK CLEMENT:
AND THE PHONE RANG AND
JOHNNY CASH WANTED ME TO--

HE SAID HE'S GOING TO CUT
A RECORD IN NASHVILLE
WITH TRUMPETS ON IT,

AND HE WANTED ME TO COME UP AND
HELP HIM FIGURE IT OUT,

SO I FLEW UP
AND GOT IN THERE

AND HE HAD THESE
TWO OR 3 TRUMPETS,

AND THEY DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THEY
WERE GOING TO DO.

THEY HAD MUSIC,
BUT IT WAS BLANK,

SO I SAID, "WHY DON'T
YOU GO [IMITATES TRUMPET]?"

AND THEY WROTE THAT DOWN,

AND THEN I SAID,
"GO [IMITATES TRUMPET]"

["RING OF FIRE" PLAYING]

JOHNNY CASH: â€œ LOVE
IS A BURNING THING â€œ

â€œ AND IT MAKES A FIERY RING

â€œ BOUND BY WILD DESIRE

â€œ I FELL INTO A RING OF FIRE

â€œ I FELL INTO A BURNING
RING OF FIRE... â€œ

NARRATOR: "RING OF FIRE"
SPENT 7 WEEKS

AT NUMBER ONE ON
THE COUNTRY CHARTS,

AND AN ALBUM FEATURING IT

LASTED MORE THAN A YEAR
ON THE POP CHARTS.

JOHNNY CASH:
â€œ THE RING OF FIRE...

NARRATOR: VIVIAN HATED
"RING OF FIRE"

AND TRIED HER BEST TO AVOID

THE RADIO STATIONS THAT SEEMED
TO PLAY IT CONSTANTLY.

SHE ASSOCIATED IT
WITH JUNE CARTER,

WHOSE VOICE COULD BE
HEARD ON THE RECORD

SINGING
BACKUP WITH HER SISTERS.

"THE MERE MENTION OF
HER NAME ANNOYED ME,"
VIVIAN WOULD REMEMBER.

"I LONGED FOR THE DAYS
WHEN JOHNNY TOLD ME

HE'D ALWAYS WALK
THE LINE FOR ME."

JOHNNY CASH:
"THE RING OF FIRE

"THE RING OF FIRE,
THE RING OF FIRE"

ANDERSON: COUNTRY MUSIC HAS
ALWAYS BEEN A FAMILY.

AND WHEN TRAGEDY STRUCK AND SOME
PEOPLE IN BELLE MEADE

OR THE FANCY PLACES IN NASHVILLE
COULD HAVE REALLY CARED LESS,

I THINK IT JUST BROUGHT US
TOGETHER THAT MUCH MORE

BECAUSE IT HURT US ALL.

IT WAS LIKE ONE PERSON,

YOU KNOW, GOT CUT
AND WE ALL BLED.

NARRATOR: IN FEBRUARY 1963,
HAWKSHAW HAWKINS WAS EXCITED

ABOUT A NEW SINGLE THAT
HE HAD JUST RECORDED,

A SWINGING HEARTBREAK SONG,
"LONESOME 7-7203."

HAWKINS: "LONESOME 7-7203..."

NARRATOR: HE WAS EVEN
MORE EXCITED THAT HIS

WIFE JEAN SHEPARD

WAS 8 MONTHS PREGNANT
WITH THEIR SECOND CHILD.

HAWKINS WAS JUST STARTING
TO PROMOTE HIS NEW RECORD

WHEN WORD REACHED NASHVILLE THAT
A POPULAR DISC JOCKEY

IN KANSAS CITY HAD BEEN KILLED
IN AN AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENT.

A LOCAL PROMOTER THERE WAS
PUTTING TOGETHER

A BENEFIT CONCERT
TO HELP THE FAMILY,

AND A TROUPE OF OPRY STARS
AGREED TO GO TO KANSAS CITY

FOR THE SHOW,
INCLUDING HAWKINS.

AND A WHOLE BUNCH
OF THE PEOPLE WENT,

AND HAWK WAS ONE OF THEM.

HE WAS ONE OF THE FIRST ONES
TO VOLUNTEER

'CAUSE BACK THEN,
YOU DID STUFF LIKE THIS.

NARRATOR: BEFORE HE LEFT
FOR KANSAS CITY,

HAWKSHAW TOLD JEAN, "I HOPE THIS
ONE'S A BOY, TOO."

THEN HE STOPPED BY
THE WSM STUDIO

TO HAND-DELIVER A COPY
OF HIS NEW SINGLE.

ANDERSON: HAWKSHAW
GAVE RALPH EMERY A COPY
OF "LONESOME 7-7203,"

A PROMOTIONAL 45-RPM COPY WITH
A WHITE LABEL ON IT.

AND ON THE LABEL,

HE WROTE TO RALPH,

"PLAY THE HELL
OUT OF IT, HAWK."

HAWKSHAW: "7-7203"

NARRATOR: THE BENEFIT
SHOW IN KANSAS CITY'S

MEMORIAL BUILDING WAS HELD ON
SUNDAY, MARCH 3.

PATSY CLINE FLEW IN
FROM HER RECENT TOUR.

SHE WAS TIRED AND HAD
COME DOWN WITH A BAD COLD,

BUT SHE CLOSED THE CONCERT WITH
A SET OF HER HITS,

ALONG WITH TWO SHE HAD JUST
RECORDED BUT NOT YET RELEASED--

"FADED LOVE"
AND "SWEET DREAMS."

CLINE: "I REMEMBER OUR

"FADED LOVE..."

NARRATOR: AS THE MUSICIANS
PREPARED TO MAKE THEIR
SEPARATE WAYS

HOME TO NASHVILLE
THE NEXT MORNING,

HAWKINS GAVE UP HIS COMMERCIAL
AIRLINE TICKET

TO A FRIEND
WHOSE FATHER WAS ILL.

HE SAID HE'D FLY BACK LATER
WITH PATSY CLINE.

BECAUSE OF HER RECENT SUCCESS,

CLINE NOW TRAVELED IN A 4-SEAT
PIPER COMANCHE

FLOWN BY HER
MANAGER RANDY HUGHES.

COWBOY COPAS, ANOTHER STAR,

HITCHED A RIDE, TOO.

CLINE: â€” AND REMEMBER
OUR FADED â€”

â€” LOVE

NARRATOR: AFTER A DAY'S DELAY
BECAUSE OF BAD WEATHER,

THE SMALL PLANE
FINALLY DEPARTED KANSAS CITY

ON THE AFTERNOON
OF MARCH 5, 1963.

WEST OF NASHVILLE, THEY FLEW
INTO DENSE RAIN CLOUDS.

HUGHES WAS NOT TRAINED
TO FLY BY INSTRUMENTS.

[TELEPHONE RINGS]

[RING]

SHEPARD: IT WAS ABOUT
10:00, 10:30.

I HAD PUT THE BABY DOWN
IN BED AND I HAD LAID DOWN

AND HAD JUST DOZED OFF TO SLEEP
WHEN THE PHONE RANG,

AND IT WAS
THIS WOMAN, EILEEN,

AND SHE SAID,
"WHAT ARE YOU DOING?"

I SAID, "WELL, I'M
TRYING TO GO TO SLEEP."

AND SHE SAID, "OH, MY
GOD, YOU DON'T KNOW."

I KNEW THEN.

NARRATOR: FRIENDS STARTED
SHOWING UP AT THE HOUSE,

INCLUDING MINNIE PEARL,
WHO TRIED TO HELP JEAN

THROUGH THE LONG NIGHT AS THEY
WAITED FOR MORE NEWS.

ANDERSON: I GOT A PHONE CALL
ABOUT 7:15 THAT MORNING

FROM THE WIFE OF A DEAR
FRIEND OF MINE.

SHE SAID, "GO TURN ON WSM
RIGHT NOW."

SO I TURNED ON THE RADIO
AND OPRY ANNOUNCERS

WERE TALKING AND THEY WERE--
THEY WERE CRYING.

YOU COULD ACTUALLY HEAR
THE TEARS IN THEIR VOICE

AS THEY WERE TELLING THEIR
AUDIENCE AND THE WORLD

FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT THIS
PLANE HAD GONE DOWN.

NARRATOR: MEANWHILE,
A FRANTIC SEARCH

WAS UNDERWAY
NEAR CAMDEN, TENNESSEE.

THE SONGWRITER ROGER MILLER
JOINED THE TEAM

COMBING THE FOREST,
CALLING OUT HIS FRIENDS'
NAMES IN THE DARKNESS.

AS THE SUN CAME UP,
HE CLIMBED A FIRE TOWER,

SAW SOME TORN TREE TOPS,
AND LED THE GROUP

TO THE CRASH SITE,
LITTERED WITH DEBRIS--

A HAIRBRUSH, GOLD SLIPPER, AND
CIGARETTE LIGHTER OF PATSY'S,

HAWKSHAW HAWKINS' LEATHER BELT,
ONE OF HIS COWBOY BOOTS,

THE BROKEN NECK OF HIS
GUITAR.

CLINE: â SWEET DREAMS

OF YOU â

â EVERY NIGHT

â I GO THROUGH

â WHY CAN'T I FORGET YOU

â AND START MY LIFE ANEW

â INSTEAD OF HAVING
SWEET DREAMS ABOUT YOU? â

â YOU DON'T LOVE ME

â IT'S PLAIN

â I...

NARRATOR: AFTER THE FUNERALS,
THE GRAND OLE OPRY

PAID TRIBUTE TO THEM ALL IN
A MEMORIAL SERVICE.

THE COUNTRY MUSIC FAMILY
WAS IN SHOCK,

BUT WANTED TO GIVE THEIR LOST
FRIENDS A PROPER GOOD-BYE

AND HOLD CLOSE THE
CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND.

CLINE: â YOU DON'T LOVE ME,
IT'S PLAIN â

â I SHOULD KNOW

â I'LL NEVER WEAR
YOUR RING... â

SHEPARD: I HAD THE
BABY ABOUT A MONTH LATER,

AND IT WAS REALLY ROUGH.

MY MOTHER AND DADDY STAYED
WITH ME FOR A COUPLE OF MONTHS.

I WAS JUST KIND OF LOST,
KIND OF A LOST FEELING.

YOU KNOW?

AND I JUST--I JUST TOOK IT ONE
DAY AT A TIME, SO TO SPEAK.

CLINE: "SWEET...

NARRATOR: IN THE WEEKS
THAT FOLLOWED,

HAWKSHAW HAWKINS'
"LONESOME 7-7203"

WOULD RISE TO THE TOP
OF THE COUNTRY CHARTS,

HIS ONLY NUMBER-ONE HIT.

LIKE JIMMIE RODGERS'
AND HANK WILLIAMS',

PATSY CLINE'S LIFE AND
CAREER HAD ENDED FAR TOO SOON.

SHE WAS JUST 30 YEARS OLD.

CLINE: "...FORGET
THE PAST..."

NARRATOR: HER LOSS
WOULD RESONATE

IN COUNTRY MUSIC
FOR DECADES...

CLINE: "INSTEAD OF
HAVING SWEET DREAMS "

" ABOUT YOU

NARRATOR: BUT HER SIGNATURE
SONG "CRAZY"

WOULD GO ON TO BECOME
THE NUMBER-ONE JUKEBOX
TUNE OF ALL TIME.

[COIN RATTLES]

[CLICKING]

["CRAZY" PLAYING]

"

CLINE: " CRAZY

" I'M CRAZY FOR
FEELING SO LONELY "

" I'M CRAZY

â CRAZY FOR FEELING SO BLUE

â I KNEW

â YOU'D LOVE ME
AS LONG AS YOU WANTED â

NARRATOR: NEXT TIME
ON "COUNTRY MUSIC,"

A NEW SOUND COMES OUT
OF CALIFORNIA...

MERLE HAGGARD: â IT'S A BIG JOB
JUST GETTIN'... â

RONNIE MILSAP: I THINK
MERLE HAGGARD, ALL BY HIMSELF,

SAVED COUNTRY MUSIC.

NARRATOR: LORETTA LYNN BRINGS A
FRESH PERSPECTIVE TO COUNTRY...

HAROLD BRADLEY: WHATEVER'S
IN THAT WOMAN'S HEART COMES
OUT OF HER MOUTH.

NARRATOR: AND CHARLEY PRIDE
BLAZES A TRAIL OF HIS OWN...

PRIDE: ONCE THEY HEARD ME SING,

"I DON'T CARE IF HE'S GREEN.
I LIKE HIS SINGING."

NARRATOR: WHEN "COUNTRY MUSIC"
CONTINUES.

PRIDE: â ...GIRLS IN MY TIME,
BUT THAT WAS BEFORE... â

PATSY CLINE: â WONDERING

TO EXPERIENCE MORE
OF COUNTRY MUSIC,

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â AND CRAZY FOR CRYING

â AND I'M CRAZY
FOR LOVING YOU â

â CRAZY

â FOR THINKING THAT
MY LOVE COULD HOLD YOU â

â I'M CRAZY FOR TRYING

â AND CRAZY FOR CRYING

â AND I'M CRAZY
FOR LOVING â

â YOU